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Cannity
Marshall House
F. H. Lawrence

Rev. Lammont
George's Row
White Chapel
Stepney Green
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Thos. Gray
Bell Lane
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W. Cadman
Bethnal
Green

REPORT

OF THE

Seventh National

CONFERENCE

OF

UNITARIAN, LIBERAL CHRISTIAN, FREE
CHRISTIAN, PRESBYTERIAN, AND OTHER NON-SUBSCRIBING
OR KINDRED CONGREGATIONS.

HELD AT

LEICESTER,

APRIL, 1900.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

HULL: ELSOM & CO., MARKET-PLACE.

LONDON: ESSEX HALL, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.

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• 1900.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE SEVENTH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE was held at Leicester on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, April 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th, 1900. Its Officers and Committee were as under :—

President :

W. BLAKE ODGERS, Q.C., LL.D.

Vice-President :

JAMES R. BEARD, J.P.

Treasurer :

HOWARD CHATFEILD CLARKE.

Hon. Secs. :

A. W. WORTHINGTON, J.P.
Rev. F. W. STANLEY.

CHARLES FENTON.
Rev. JOHN ELLIS.

Committee :

Elected Members.

J. COGAN CONWAY.

Rev. H. E. DOWSON, B.A.

Rev. C. HARGROVE, M.A.

Rev. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.

Rev. L. P. JACKS, M.A.

DAVID MARTINEAU, J.P.

Rev. S. A. STEINTHAL.

Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.

Rev. P. H. WICKSTEED, M.A.

Rev. JOSEPH WOOD.

Representatives of Societies :

HENRY BLESSLEY.

Rev. B. C. CONSTABLE.

JOSEPH COVENTRY.

Rev. E. M. DAPLYN.

EDWIN ELLIS, J.P.

Rev. H. GOW, B.A.

Rev. R. T. HERFORD, B.A.

Rev. E. C. JONES, M.A.

Rev. J. A. KELLY.

GEORGE H. LEIGH.

Rev. P. MOORE, B.A.

C. H. PERKINS.

Rev. J. H. VANCE, B.D.

Rev. FRANK WALTERS.

PHILIP J. WORSLEY.

Co-opted Members :

Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

Rev. J. E. CARPENTER, M.A.

E. CLEPHAN, J.P.

H. T. COOPER.

F. NETTLEFOLD.

LEICESTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Chairman :

E. CLEPHAN, J.P.

Vice-Chairmen :

Rev. H. Gow, B.A.
E. F. COOPER, F.L.S.
WILLIAM EVANS.

T. F. JOHNSON, J.P.
C. H. ROBERTS.
WILLIAM SIMPSON.

Committee :

Mrs. J. M. GIMSON.
Miss CLEPHAN.
Rev. W. WHITTAKER, B.A.
J. W. BURTON.
A. J. GIMSON.
J. A. HOPPS.

S. J. LILLEY.
A. H. PAGET.
W. F. PRICE.
W. RAVEN.
G. A. ROYCE.
T. A. WYKES.

Treasurer :

E. F. COOPER, F.L.S.

Local Hon. Secretaries :

Miss M. C. GITTINS.

HARRY T. COOPER.

There were also Committees appointed for Hospitality, Refreshment Room and Decorations, Music, etc.

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS.

TUESDAY, APRIL 3RD, 1900.

P.M.

3-30. Reception at the Great Meeting Schools by the Leicester Committee.

4-0. Address by the President, and Welcome to Foreign Delegates.

5-30. Tea at the Great Meeting Schools, East Bond Street.

6-30. Communion Service in the Great Meeting Schools, conducted by Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., and Rev. C. C. Coe, F.R.G.S.

8-0. Service at the Temperance Hall, London Road, conducted by Rev. H. Gow, B.A. Preacher, Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4TH.

At the Temperance Hall, London Road.

A.M.

10-0. Devotional Service, conducted by Rev. E. L. H. Thomas, B.A.

10-30. Address by Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A., LL.D. Subject: '*James Martineau*.'11-0. Conference. Chairman: Mr. E. Clephan, J.P. Paper by Rev. J. E. Odgers, M.A., Subject: '*The Historical Development of our Freedom and Faith, and the Importance of its Study*.' Discussion opened by Rev. Walter Lloyd.

P.M.

1-0. Luncheon at the Assembly Rooms, Hotel Street.

2-30. Conference. Chairman: Mr. H. P. Greg, M.A. Paper by Rev. Jno. Ellis, Subject: '*How best to Organize the Religious Life of our Young People*.' Discussion opened by Rev. John Byles, and Miss Edith Gittins. Paper by Mr. A. H. Worthington, B.A., Subject: '*The Future Supply of our Ministers*.' Discussion.

8-0. Conversazione at the Museum Buildings, New Walk.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5TH.

At the Temperance Hall.

A.M.

10-0. Devotional Service, conducted by Rev. J. H. Weatherall, B.A.

10-30. Papers without Discussion. Chairman: Mr. Charles W. Jones, J.P. (1) By Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, M.A., on '*The Fear of God and the Sense of Sin*'; (2) by Mrs. Humphry Ward, on '*Gospel Interpretation—A Fragment*.'

P.M.

1-0. Luncheon at the Assembly Rooms, Hotel Street.

2-30. Business Meeting. The President in the Chair. Resolution regarding the late Dr. Martineau. Report of Committee. New Rules and Roll of the Conference. Election of Officers and Committee. Report on Ministerial Pensions: Resolution by Mr. J. Cogan Conway.

8-0. Public Meeting. Chairman: The President, Mr. W. Blake Odgers Q.C. Subject: '*Signs of Progress in Christendom*.' Speakers: Rev. J. Page Hopps, Rev. L. de B. Klein, D.Sc., and Rev. Joseph Wood.

FRIDAY, APRIL 6TH.

At the Temperance Hall.

A.M.

10-0. Devotional Service, conducted by Rev. E. W. Lummis, M.A.

10-30. Conference. Chairman : Mr. T. Grosvenor Lee, B.A. Paper by Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A., Subject : '*The Conduct of Public Worship.*' Discussion opened by Miss Clephan, and Rev. Edgar I. Fripp, B.A.

The Conference proved to be most interesting and successful. Congratulations are due to the Leicester friends and to the officers of the Conference, for the indefatigable zeal with which all duties were performed. Arrangements had been made with the Railway Companies for the issue of cheap tickets at a single fare and a quarter, to delegates and others attending the meetings.

It is almost impossible to secure absolute accuracy in such statistics ; but, as nearly as it is possible to tell, 198 ministers, 47 ministers' wives and 105 delegates were provided with hospitality ; 80 other delegates and 127 representatives found accommodation for themselves. It is not possible to tell how many additional and unofficial visitors from churches outside Leicester attended the meetings. The guests were not all entertained in the houses of Unitarians ; but as on previous occasions, members of the Established and Nonconformist churches, including clergymen and ministers, most cordially extended a hospitality which was gratefully accepted. Close upon 500 persons attended the Communion Service at the Great Meeting on Tuesday evening ; 1100 were present at the Public Service which followed ; and fully 1200 gathered together for the Public Meeting on Thursday evening. All the Conference Meetings were well attended, and it was gratifying to observe that there were unusually good congregations at the Devotional Services with which the proceedings of each day began.

It was generally felt by those present, that the Conference was well up to the standard of excellence set by its predecessors, and that it was interesting, helpful and inspiring. From this year the Conference will have new life and power. Its new Constitution, embodied in the Rules on p. 139, gives it real executive power ; and it will be observed that following the reading and discussion of several of the Papers, resolutions were passed which instructed the Committee to engage in some important branches of work of vital interest to the life of our Churches. The Report of the Committee will be found on page 132.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST DAY.

TUESDAY, APRIL 3RD, 1900.

EARLY in the afternoon ministers, delegates, and visitors began to arrive in Leicester from all parts of the United Kingdom, in order to be in time for the Reception in the Great Meeting Schools at 3-30 p.m. The Reception Committee were Mr. E. Clephan, Chairman of the Great Meeting, Mr. C. H. Roberts, Chairman of Narboro' Road Church, and Mrs. Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. T. Fielding Johnson, and Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Cooper. The large upper room was carpeted and otherwise tastefully arranged ; and by four o'clock, when the President, Mr. W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., delivered his address, the room was quite full ; indeed, there was barely accommodation for the late arrivals. Mr. Clephan, on behalf of the Leicester friends, said in a few words how pleased and proud they were to see so many ministers and delegates present, and he extended to them a hearty welcome. Mr. Odgers, upon taking the chair, expressed the thanks of the visitors to the Leicester Committee for all the trouble they had taken to secure their comfort and make the meetings a success. He then proceeded with his address.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT.

(W. BLAKE ODGERS, Q.C., LL.D.)

MINISTERS AND DELEGATES,

Once more we meet in conference as representatives of the Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-Subscribing or kindred Churches. And it is my duty to open this our seventh Triennial Conference by delivering a Presidential address. In such an address it is usual, I believe, for

the speaker to call attention to the events which have occurred since the last Conference—or rather to such of them as he deems of special importance to the group of churches whose representatives he is addressing. If that be my duty, then there is one event which has happened during the last three years which is of paramount importance to our free churches. We have lost the man who was our leader. On the 11th of January of this year died James Martineau; and his loss, to my mind, overshadows in importance all other events which have affected especially our group of churches since we last met at Sheffield.

We have lost our leader, James Martineau, the greatest thinker, theologian, and philosopher among us—may I not say, the greatest thinker, theologian, and philosopher of his age? I am no philosopher, no theologian. I cannot speak of his work and influence in such matters; others must do that. But I can give expression to my own esteem and affection for the man who in such kindly manner received me at his house in Gordon Street when I was a lad at University Hall. I know how dear he was to the congregations that listened to his sermons, and to the students who gathered to his lectures. We all grieve to think that we shall see no more that lofty brow, that genial smile, that noble presence. But his writings remain to us: we shall lovingly cherish his memory, and prize the principles which he laid down.

Speaking, however, as your President in this the first official utterance since his death, it is right that I should dwell especially on the great service that Dr. Martineau rendered to this National Conference. I refer to his famous speech at Leeds, when he laid before us his Organisation Scheme. I remember well the intense interest with which that large audience sat spell-bound while Dr. Martineau, who had then just passed his eighty-fourth birthday, spoke on and on, with force unabated and clearness unsurpassed. I remember well the impression that that speech made on all of us, how he convinced us all of the necessity of husbanding and organising our forces, of improving the education and increasing the stipends of our ministers, and uniting ministers and laymen in organised work for the common cause,

And let no one imagine that Dr. Martineau's scheme was abortive, or that his great speech produced no tangible result. The contrary is the fact. It is true that with the details of his scheme we did not all agree. Some of us thought that in his speech he too much ignored our existing organisations, and too little recognised the good work that was actually being done. But with the motive and spirit of his speech, with its aim and object, we were all in accord. That something should be done, and done at once, and that it should be something on the lines of Dr. Martineau's scheme, we were all convinced. Accordingly, after a full discussion, a committee of sixteen gentlemen was appointed 'to submit the scheme contained in Dr. Martineau's paper to the churches, societies, associations, etc., to collect opinions thereon, and to call a meeting of the Conference at some future date.' This committee reported to a Special Conference held at Nottingham on March 6th, 1890; and at that meeting important resolutions were carried, which have borne good fruit and done much to amend the constitution and increase the efficiency of our District Associations. In the first place, boundaries were re-arranged, so as to secure that practically the whole of England should be covered with local associations, under which all or nearly all our Churches might be grouped. In the South-Eastern Counties, where no District Association existed, the Provincial Assembly of Non-Subscribing Ministers and Congregations of London and the South-Eastern Counties was formed—an assembly which, with the aid of its two excellent ministers-at-large, the Rev. T. W. Freckleton and the Rev. T. E. M. Edwards, has done so much to sustain the isolated and outlying congregations in the Home Counties. The creation of this Assembly, and the good work which it has done, are entirely due to the movement initiated by Dr. Martineau's great speech at Leeds.

Another good result sprang from the same cause. It was found that our District Associations had every variety of name, and also every variety of constitution. In a few cases it was necessary to alter the name of a local association to some more comprehensive title, so as to embrace all churches included in the title of this Conference. And this was gladly done. Next, it was felt to be urgently

desirable that each local association should represent the congregations within its district : that is, that its committee or other governing body should consist of representatives elected directly by those churches. Some of our local associations had already a representative constitution of this kind. All the others—I believe without exception—adopted such a constitution before the next meeting of this Conference. And now in all our English District Associations the principle of representation of churches has been adopted : for which again we primarily must thank Dr. Martineau.

One other reference I will make to his great speech at Leeds. No one who was present and heard that speech will ever forget the emphasis with which Dr. Martineau pronounced these two sentences :—

‘If anyone, being a Unitarian, shrinks on fitting occasion from plainly calling himself so, he is a sneak and a coward ; if, being of our catholic communion, he calls his chapel, or its congregation, Unitarian, he is a traitor to his spiritual ancestry, and a deserter to the camp of its persecutors.’

It is perhaps necessary to refer once more to this famous passage, because there has been a tendency in some directions, amid the chorus of laudatory comments on Dr. Martineau’s life and work, to speak of him as though he were a member of no denomination, far above petty sectarian differences of opinion, and as one who declined to label himself a Unitarian. He objected most sturdily to chapels and trusts and congregations being labelled ‘Unitarian ;’ for that, he thought, would fetter posterity. But he never objected to any individual saying ‘I am a Unitarian.’ He never objected, on fitting occasion, so to describe himself. In the last year of his life, he sent a contribution to the Permanent Chapel Building Fund, which the London Unitarians are now raising to build new chapels in the metropolis.

I well remember that one of the first bits of work I had to do, when I was placed upon the Book Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, was to read the manuscript of Dr. Martineau’s Preface to Mr. Hall’s translation of Professor Bonet-Maury’s ‘Early Sources of English Unitarianism.’ Why this was given to me, I know not ; what I was to do with it, I cannot think. I know

I had sense enough not to touch or alter one word of it. But I can remember to this day, that clear, neat, upright writing which we all knew so well. And, above all, I was greatly struck by one powerful and beautiful passage in that Preface, the value and importance of which has not, I think, been generally recognized.

Dr. Martineau had been dealing with the various events and trains of thought which Mr. Bonet-Maury and others had suggested as sources from which English Unitarianism had sprung. He proceeds thus :—

‘ But there is one unorthodox influence so powerful and so extensively diffused as almost to supersede inquiry into the personal pedigree of English Unitarianism—I mean, the English Bible. It is difficult for us to realize the startling effect of throwing open to Europe in its vernacular tongues a Sacred Literature vehemently contrasted, in matter, in form, in spirit, with the ecclesiastical stereotype of Christianity. For their impressions of the Saviour’s life and person, the multitude had been dependent on pictures in the churches, which taught whatever the artist fancied ; and they knew as much about cherubs and angels and legendary saints, and things in heaven and things in hell, as about the Galilean lake and hills, and the gracious figure and real incidents that have consecrated them for ever. The celebration of the Mass, the repetitions counted by the Rosary, the resort to the Confessional, the submission to Penance, the purchase of Indulgences, the recital of the Creeds, the exercise of Mariolatry, set up in their imagination a vast mythology as the faith of Christendom. The Trinity is in every prayer ; the prayers go through the day ; and the church days go through the year ; and at every turn of nature or of grace, the Priest steps in to find it ill or make it good. Suppose a worshipper, with mind thus pre-occupied, to find, chained to a public desk within his church, one of the new Bibles in his own language, and to be so arrested by it as to forget what he came for, and stay with it while others pass on to the choir. As he reads, are the thoughts and images which the page throws upon his mind in tune with the familiar offices which he faintly overhears ? Does his attention rest upon the suppliant cries of Psalmist or Prophet or Apostle or of the Man of Sorrows himself ? They are silent of the “ Holy, blessed, glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God,” wherein every church prayer finds its crown. Does he alight on the Pauline uni-personal profession of theistic faith, “ To us there is one God, the Father.” Does then the Apostle’s “ one God,” comprise no “ Son,” and no “ Holy Ghost ” ? Does he read the story of the Last Supper, or the Apostolic instructions for its celebration at Corinth ? Is this a Sacrament ? Where is the Priest ? Where the Miracle ? Where the Sacerdotal monopoly of the

Cup? Where the "Unbloody Sacrifice"? It is the same all through. A mind surrendered, with the freshness and freedom which true piety gives, to the broad characteristics of the Scriptures, could not but suffer estrangement from the very essence of the ecclesiastic theory. First, no doubt, escaping from its degrading imposture of priestly mediation, into immediate spiritual relations with heaven; but, ere long, irresistibly impressed by the purely monotheistic character of the Biblical theology, and the genuine humanism of the Christology. The evangelical spirit that sprung up from the re-opened "word of God," was, in all its operations, a new birth of religion into simplicity; throwing off, to begin with, the incubus of church "works," and delivering the individual soul to the life of inward faith and love; and then, in due time, reducing that inward faith itself to simpler terms, without the tangled threads which no thought could smooth into a consistent tissue. Starting from Luther's first translated Pauline Epistles, it snatched Redemption from the Altar and made it over to the Conscience. Concentrated next upon the Gospels, it identified itself with the Religion of Christ, and found the Revelation only the perfecting of Reason. It was the mission of Wiclif and the "Reformers before the Reformation" as well as at its outset, to carry the emancipation through the first stage; of Crell and Biddle, of the Arminians and Latitudinarians, of Price and Priestley, of Channing, the Coquerels, and Parker, to suffer no pause short of the second.

'Throughout this movement until very near its end, both impulse and direction have been due to the Scriptures, used as the charter of spiritual rights. By resort to this test, everything has been accomplished. Fathers, Councils, Tradition, Donation of Constantine, Primacy of Peter, have been put to flight by rigorous loyalty to the "pure word of Holy Writ," the "naked Gospel," the "Oracles of God," as understood by the individual disciple's reason and conscience. The earlier Unitarians, notwithstanding their repulse of rationalism, drew their doctrine out of the Scriptures, much to their own surprise, and did not import it into them. Biddle, for instance, declares that "he experienced his first doubts respecting the Trinity in reading the Bible, before he had ever seen a Socinian book." And how great a thirst was appeased by the opening of the long-sealed fountain of Living Waters may be judged from this,—that the first enthusiasm of the evangelic spirit, in both its forms, was for diffusing the Bible in the language of each land.'

Meeting as we do to-day within easy reach of Wiclif's Lutterworth, I felt that I should like to read to you that passage. And where can you find a clearer or more beautiful statement of the result which the unprejudiced study of the Scriptures produces on a mind honestly eager for the truth? I hope and trust that when a

new and uniform edition of Dr. Martineau's collected works is published this Preface will not be omitted.

Such words are needed. They are needed now, as much as they were in 1884, when they were written. For in the very week in which Dr. Martineau died, while Catholics and Protestants, Churchmen and Dissenters were all alike chanting his praises, while it seemed as though the various branches of the Christian Church might all unite at last in one happy brotherhood, a remarkable correspondence was passing between Dr. St. George Mivart and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, to which, I think, the attention of Protestants has not been sufficiently called. On January 9th, 1900, the Archbishop forwarded to Dr. Mivart a 'Profession of Catholic Faith,' which he was to sign. On January 16th (the very day of Dr. Martineau's funeral) he was threatened with excommunication, if he still remained obdurate. He did remain obdurate, on January 19th he was inhibited from the sacraments; and on Sunday last (April 1st) he died.

Who was Dr. Mivart, and what was his offence?

St. George Mivart was an eminent man of science—a Doctor of Medicine, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and for many years Professor of Biology at one of our London Colleges. Born in 1827, he became a Catholic in 1844, and wrote and spoke in defence of Catholic doctrines and methods with all the ardour of a convert. He was acknowledged and applauded by English Catholics as a sturdy champion of their cause. He held his own in argument with Darwin, on the 'Genesis of Species'; he contended successfully with Huxley and with Spencer. But gradually science resumed her mastery over his intellect; gradually doubts as to the absolute accuracy of the orthodox doctrines as to heaven and hell and the making of the world stole into his mind. And at length, at the age of 73, 'thinking death not far off,' he wrote 'under a sense of duty' two articles—one in the *Fortnightly Review* and the other in the *Nineteenth Century*—and he declared that his object in writing these articles was 'to open as widely as possible the gates of Catholicity,' and 'to make conformity as easy as might be.'

I can deal to-day with only one of these articles—that which

appeared this year in the January number of the *Nineteenth Century*, and which, coming as it does from a member of the Catholic Church, is a truly remarkable article. I beg you to read the whole of it, as I can only give you the merest outline to-day. Dr. Mivart's first proposition is that there have been among Catholics during recent years very great modifications of belief, which have never been embodied in any authoritative dogmatic creed; and that these new beliefs are silently and continually spreading in all directions, especially amongst educated Catholics. He points out, for instance, that many good Catholics no longer believe that the earth is enclosed in a revolving crystal sphere called the firmament, or that the sun goes round the earth, or that the universe was created in six days. He reminds his readers that for centuries it was the doctrine of the Catholic Church that no one outside its pale could be saved—*nulla salus extra ecclesiam*—and that that, indeed, was the Church's sole excuse for the fires at Smithfield and the tortures of the Inquisition. 'Now, however,' he says, 'it is admitted by the most rigid Roman theologians that men who do not even accept any form of Christianity, if only they are theists and lead good lives, may have an assured hope for the future, similar to that of a virtuous Christian believer.' And he gives many other instances of beliefs that have changed, such as the conception of God as an extremely powerful 'Oriental despot,' the belief in witchcraft and in possession by devils, and the doctrine that it is sinful to take interest for money lent, which was formerly held by all good Catholics, who at the same time regarded it as lawful and proper for a Cardinal to preside over the drawing of lots at a State lottery.

Again, he calls attention to a marked change in the belief entertained by Catholics with respect to the Scriptures. They formerly regarded the Bible 'as an entirely supernatural work.' Every word in it was directly inspired by the Holy Ghost, and therefore must be accepted as absolutely and literally true—even on matters of physical science. 'Now,' says Dr. Mivart, 'in spite of an apparent official maintenance of such old views in the present day, they seem to be entirely abandoned by almost all educated Catholics. . . . Comparatively few persons now believe that the account in Genesis

of the creation of the world, or of Adam and Eve, is, in any sense, historical and true; or that diversities of language were due to God's fear lest men should build a tower to reach heaven; or that Joshua and Isaiah in any way interfered with the regularity of the earth's rotation on its axis.' This is a somewhat startling statement, coming, as it does, from an ardent Roman Catholic; but Dr. Mivart proves it by quoting specific extracts from the published works of modern Roman Catholic divines, one of whom makes the very sensible remark that 'instead of attempting to find the secrets of science in the Bible, the true meaning of the Bible where it touches on things of nature should be sought for in science.'

Then Dr. Mivart deals with the claim put forward for many centuries that the Councils of the Roman Catholic Church had alone the right and power to interpret the Bible to us—that it was exclusively for them to pronounce what the words of Holy Writ really mean. He takes but one instance, viz., the well-known passage in Isaiah vii. 14-16.

'Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.'

Dr. Mivart points out of course that the Hebrew word which has here been translated, 'virgin,' really means any young woman, married or unmarried. He then proceeds:

'This used to be regarded as a prediction of the miraculous conception of Our Lord by a virgin, and it is actually referred to as such by St. Matthew. Yet there is probably no well-informed Catholic now who would deny that what Isaiah said was intended to calm the dread which Ahaz (King of Judah) felt with respect to Pekah (King of Israel) and Rezin (King of Syria), by assuring him that before a young woman's newly born child should be old enough to know right from wrong, the two kings so dreaded should have disappeared. No one would now fail to see the absurdity of supposing that King Ahaz could be comforted by being told of an abnormal birth to take place seven hundred years after his death.'

To us, of course, this interpretation is nothing new. I am told that Dr. Martineau gave the same explanation of the passage in the

Liverpool controversy in 1839. But what is new is the statement, by one who must know the facts, that every well-informed Catholic now accepts this explanation. I had no idea that the teachings of Dr. Martineau and other Biblical critics had found so many disciples in the stronghold of orthodoxy. 'There are actually,' said Dr. Mivart, 'devout Catholics of both sexes, well known and highly esteemed—weekly communicants and leading lives devoted to charity and religion—who believe Joseph to have been the real and natural father of Jesus.'

'Various other modifications of view might be mentioned, but the above will suffice to show that great changes have taken place, and that it is possible yet others may follow. My business is limited to calling attention to the wonderful transformation which has taken place amongst Catholics, as well as others.

'I write thus because I am very strongly impressed with the various dangers wherewith Catholicity is now threatened; and as it is to me evident that, as a moral agent, its power and influence are still enormous, I would do my best to serve it now as I have done in the past.

'I have written in the way I have written, because I am convinced that it is only by intellectual breadth; by the welcoming of truth on all sides and from all quarters; by despising nothing that is good, even though it be pagan aspirations and ideals; by scrupulous honesty and candid appreciation of the true value of men and of arguments hostile to us, that solid good can be effected and Catholicity regain that universality of acceptance in the civilised world and by men of light and leading, which it once enjoyed.'

This article 'fluttered the Volscians.' If it had been written by a Protestant, by a heretic, no notice would have been taken of it. But it was written by an eminent member of the Catholic Church, who was on friendly and intimate terms with its leading dignitaries. And what was worst, he did not appear to know he was doing wrong: he seemed to think he was doing his Church a service. The *Tablet* was up in arms at once, and published a fierce attack on Dr. Mivart. The Cardinal Archbishop called on him at once to recant. He must express his 'reprobation' of the articles which he had written, and his 'sincere sorrow for having published them.' What most annoyed the Cardinal Archbishop was Dr. Mivart's audacious suggestion that the Church might possibly be willing to

admit new light, and some day perhaps itself accept these new ideas as sound doctrine. Dr. Mivart must sign a Profession of Faith, and 'submit himself unreservedly to the authority of the Catholic Church.' The next letter is more peremptory: 'I ask you to sign the formula of Catholic Faith, which I sent to you on Tuesday. As you are aware, no one can reject the profession of faith contained therein and still be a member of the Catholic Church.' Dr. Mivart did reject the profession of faith contained therein, and has therefore been excommunicated. Will you believe it? The formula of Catholic Faith which Dr. Mivart was required to sign on pain of expulsion from his Church contained the following proposition:—

'In accordance with the Holy Council of Trent and of the Vatican, I receive all the books of the Old and New Testament with all their parts, as set forth in the fourth section of the Council of Trent and contained in the ancient Latin edition of the Vulgate, as sacred and canonical, and I firmly believe and confess that the said Scriptures are sacred and canonical—not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they are afterwards approved by the Church's authority, not merely because they contain revelation with no mixture of error, but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and have been delivered as such to the Church itself.'

But having thus excommunicated Dr. Mivart, the dignitaries of the Catholic Church still felt a little uneasy. Might not something more be expected of them? Was it quite a sufficient answer to a powerful argument to call upon your opponent to recant, and then to excommunicate him? That was the old plan, no doubt; but in these days, would it carry conviction to every mind? And so a learned Jesuit, Father Clarke, essayed to answer Dr. Mivart; and his article appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for February. And it is curious to see the answer which he gives to the man of science. It is just the same old story. The Catholic Church claims 'to be the possessor of the perfect and absolute truth.' 'The collective body of Catholic dogma consists of a number of categorical propositions,' each of which 'bears the divine authority of Jesus Christ himself.' And this 'precludes as of necessity any sort of modification or alteration in the meaning or bearing of any Catholic dogma in conse-

quence of the advance of modern science, modern discovery, or modern thought.' Hence 'the duty of submission and obedience to authority is the very breath of life to every faithful member of the Catholic Church.'

'In the Catholic Church, every dogma is essential and fundamental, and must be believed by every Catholic under pain of eternal damnation. "This is the Catholic faith, which unless a man believes faithfully and firmly he cannot be saved ; ' whether any dogma was defined by the Apostles' Creed, or by the Vatican Council, or by one of the long roll of Popes speaking in his character of doctor or teacher of the Universal Church, makes no difference whatever. It carries with it the same authority, whether it was declared to be a part of the faith in the first century or the nineteenth, and he who refuses to accept it is just as completely an alien from the commonwealth of God in the one case as in the other. And this is not all. Not only must each defined dogma be accepted ; but it must, under the same penalties, be accepted in the same sense in which it was originally laid down at the time of its definition. No change in language or in the meaning of words can affect the meaning of the doctrine as defined.'

That, at all events, is clear and precise ; and it is well that anyone who is thinking of joining the Catholic Church should know exactly to what he commits himself.

These articles, and indeed the whole correspondence between Dr. Mivart and the dignitaries of the Catholic Church, seem to me of great interest and importance. The Catholic Church is the same now as it was in the days of Bloody Mary, when the fires of Smithfield were alight. Whatever doctrine she taught then, every good Catholic must believe now. The old priestly arrogance still retains its former vigour. We must not judge for ourselves what we will believe ; we must not settle for ourselves what we will teach our children ; the priest will take all that responsibility off our shoulders. The Church knows best. Yes, indeed, according to Father Clarke, the Church alone knows exactly what doctrines are binding on the consciences of all the faithful, because it alone knows what doctrines Jesus taught his disciples when he was united to them once more after his resurrection from the dead. Then it was, says Father Clarke, that Jesus taught his disciples the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. He certainly never taught it them at any other

time. I wonder what his apostles thought of this doctrine. Anyhow they most discreetly maintained entire silence on the subject. It must have been at this time too that Jesus, if ever, taught his apostles the doctrine that future Bishops of Rome, who would be appointed centuries after his death, would be infallible. To this doctrine again the apostles never seem to have referred. Indeed, it took the Church of Rome more than eighteen hundred years to discover that this had been all along one of its most cherished doctrines. But now that the discovery has been made, every Catholic must believe these two doctrines; he must believe, too, that Christ taught them when on earth, though somehow they are omitted from the sacred narrative. And all other doctrines which the Church has ever taught since A.D. 1 the devout Catholic must believe. The Church of Rome never changes; it has always been the sole depository of all truth. What it once taught, it will teach for ever; for everything it ever taught is true. There is no room in the Catholic Church for reform, for revision, for greater light, for clearing away errors. Indeed, whoever hints that there are errors to be cleared away will be excommunicated. 'By a Catholic,' says Father Clarke, S.J., 'is meant one who gives unquestioning submission to the authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church.'

And is this spirit confined to the Church of Rome? Can we find nothing like it in some portion at all events of the Church of England? Have our parish priests none of the arrogance displayed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster? Does the Church by law established in this land never call on us to accept its *ipse dixit*, and to believe what it declares to be the truth, though to us it seems contrary to reason? Well, in the Church of England, no doubt the same spirit can be found. But it flourishes to a less degree. I gladly recognize the breadth and liberality, the Christian charity and tolerance of many English clergymen—men who would be an honour and an ornament to any Church. Still, among them are men who are actuated by a different spirit, men who, if they had the chance, would act in this century as Gardiner and Laud did in less happy times. But now these English priests move cautiously. They dare not, as a rule, join battle with an F.R.S. like Dr. Mivart,

They seldom attack grown men and women, and order them to believe this, or forbid them to believe that. And why? Because we know them; we see what they are; and such of us as were sent to the older Universities saw the making of these men who now call themselves our 'spiritual pastors and masters!' No; it is seldom that they are bold enough to dictate to educated men and women what they shall or shall not believe. But with the uneducated, and, above all, with children, it is different. Your English priest knows as well as did the Jesuits before him that if he can educate the children he is educating the future nation. That is why they are ever struggling to get the education of the children into their own hands.

And here I will venture to say one word in contravention of an opinion recently expressed by this Conference. At our meeting at Sheffield, in April, 1897, a resolution was carried, the latter portion of which ran as follows: 'That in the opinion of this Conference no settlement of the Education Question can be regarded as satisfactory and final which does not provide that only secular education shall be, directly or indirectly, paid for out of public funds.' I know that the members of the Free Churches will listen with patience to a man who ventures to express opinions with which they disagree. I am emboldened, therefore, to tell you that, in my humble opinion, that resolution was a mistake. I think it is a sad confession of weakness, if men who call themselves Unitarian Christians are driven to such a last resort as purely secular education. Surely, there is some other solution of the religious difficulty—if a religious difficulty still exists. Let the education given in our Board Schools be unsectarian, let it be independent of all ecclesiastical control; but, surely, it need not be secular! What harm can there be in our children being taught the Lord's Prayer or the Twenty-third Psalm? If it is right that the children in our Board Schools should study the lives of Socrates, Milton, and Washington, and learn from them lessons of self-sacrifice and patriotism and devotion to duty, then, surely, it is right and proper that they should study also the life of one who was greater than all these. From what source can lessons of devotion to duty and self-sacrificing love be better learnt than from the life of Christ?

But, however we may differ on this point, there is one thing on which the churches represented here to-day are all agreed. To us, the Book of Revelation is not closed. We do not shut the door in the face of modern thought or modern science. We welcome man's ever-widening knowledge of God's truth: we welcome it in matters of religion and duty as much as in matters of astronomy or engineering. We do not erect a rigid wall of dogma to exclude new light and new truth, and then pretend we have within its pale all that now is, or ever has been, or ever shall be, necessary for salvation. We do not disregard the teachings of the past. We look back to the face of Jesus Christ: we study his words, and strive to obey his precepts. And from other voices of the days that are gone,—from prophets, apostles, and martyrs,—we learn lessons of which the world is still in need. Nor do we neglect the teachings of the present; for, in these days, too, there are many voices which proclaim God's holy truth. But we also look forward to the future. We crave more light; for knowledge grows from more to more. Now 'we know in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.'

WELCOME TO FOREIGN DELEGATES

After a short interval, the PRESIDENT continued: Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure and my duty to do one more act as your President, and that is to welcome here to-day such of the delegates accredited to this meeting as do not reside in the United Kingdom. We are very glad, indeed, to welcome to this Conference friends from different parts of the world, if they will come; and we happen to have here to-day Mr. Nicholas Paine Gilman, Professor of Sociology at the Meadville Theological School of America. His name is well known to you, I am sure, for he is one of the editors of the *New World*, as well as Professor of Sociology at Meadville. You may also hear of him at the Manchester College, where he is to give some addresses—probably on Profit Sharing, because I am told he is the greatest authority on that vexed question. But he is here to-day as the delegate of the National Unitarian Conference of America, and as such I welcome Mr. Gilman among us.

MR. GILMAN: It is a great honour and a great privilege, Mr. President, and ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters of the Unitarian faith, to be able to bring to you a word of greeting from the American National Con-

ference. We have been commissioned—Mrs. Gilman and myself—to extend to you the heartiest congratulations that are in our power to express, upon your great past, upon your courageous present, and upon the inspirations which no doubt will give you a great future. We do not come here as strangers. We have not felt in the slightest degree since our landing that we were in a foreign country. It is true that the steward, who summoned us every morning to breakfast by the bugle-call, played on the last morning, when we were off Gravesend, ‘Home, sweet home’; and a very zealous American on board said: ‘Our home is not on this side of the water, we have left our sweet home on the other side.’ I said: ‘But won’t you compromise, won’t you say “our old home” as Hawthorne said?’ ‘Yes, with the greatest pleasure I will say that it is our old home.’ We are glad and very happy to see a country to which our affections, and our respect, and our pride, have so long gone forth. Nothing indeed could make Unitarians from America feel more at home than the great cordiality with which we have been received by all Unitarians whom it has been our good fortune to meet. We have been very much at home. In fact, I will candidly confess, a little too much at home in England. Why? We have been residents of Boston for many years of our lives, and we know very well what a Boston east wind is, and since we have landed we have felt very much as if we were still in Boston, on account of the great amount of east wind which we have swallowed. But I can say, and must say in all frankness, your east winds here have not the sharp and cutting quality we used to find in Boston. They are a little milder, and a little more amiable. But there has been no east wind indoors. There has been no east wind when we have met a Unitarian, but a most genial and sunny and southern atmosphere has been around us. I suppose you would like to hear a word or two about the situation of American Unitarian affairs. I happen to be located at the very small distance of seven-hundred miles from Boston. It is a very short distance, as distances go in America; but I have not frequently attended our assemblies in the last five years, so that I cannot say much about our denomination from the standpoint of the May meetings, held annually in Massachusetts; but I have regularly attended the Unitarian National Conference, and I wish to say a word or two about the last Conference, at Washington, in October. There, as here, the Unitarian body has lost many of its great leaders. We have not with us the great men who twenty years or thirty years ago we used to see—Dr. Hedge, Dr. Clarke, and Dr. Bellows, for example—and it so happened that some of the great representatives of our preachers were absent—Dr. Everett, the ablest philosophical mind we have in our body in America; Robert Collyer, whom England sent over to us; Professor Toy, the leading biblical scholar in America, and Dr. Savage, our most eminent preacher at the present time. These all were

absent. Dr. Hale was there in all the ample and abundant youth of his seventy-two years ; but what I wish to call your attention to especially is this, that in the absence of those men who were our leaders, and in the absence of other men between forty-five and sixty, whose names are familiar to you, like those of Mr. Chadwick, and Mr. Hosmer, and Mr. Gannett, the remarkable fact about the Washington meeting was the large number of young men in our ministry, between thirty-five and forty-five, who gave the greatest promise of being sometime leaders as strong and powerful as any of those whom I have named. Mr. Fenn of Chicago, Mr. St. John of Pittsburg, Mr. Pulsford—another gift from England—and half-a-dozen others I might mention, spoke at the Washington meeting in a way that made us very sure that whatever our present is, our future is secure with such men,—scholarly men, able to speak from the platform in the most acceptable form of popular address, and to make us feel that if never before, now, at least, Unitarianism may be made the Gospel of the people and for the people, by the grace of God. Now, may I say a few words about two Unitarian matters of which I have some immediate personal knowledge? The Meadville Theological School at present is the only strictly Unitarian school for ministers in America. It is now recognised as such in America, and large grants have been given to it on that ground. The School has never before been so well equipped, has never before done better work or held out greater promise than at the present day. We have a larger staff of professors, we have a better supply of books and all the material of education for the minister than ever before, and we anticipate that in the course of the next few years we shall not only be materially well-to-do as now, but rich, from the fact that various legacies will come in which will satisfy every need that can well be imagined at our School. Only a few weeks ago, through the kindness of the Rev. Robert Collyer, a sum of 25,000 dollars was given to our library. We are now strongly hoping that we shall soon have an excellent gymnasium and dining hall erected. It is our next great need ; and those two things are also great needs of the Manchester College at Oxford, where I was the other day—a divinity college incomparable for beauty, beyond anything that the United States, I think, can show—that is, a large fund for the purchase of new theological and ethical books, and a gymnasium for the physical training of ministers. One word about the ‘New World.’ I am happy to say that while we have the greatest pride possible in what it hopes to be spiritually, we also are happy to think that we have quite good ground for hopes that in the course of a year or two that periodical will be handsomely endowed, so that a thing which before has never been done in the Unitarian body may be done, and a great review, undenominational, free and liberal, will be put beyond the need of depending upon the subscribers’ list and the ups and downs of popular opinion. That

I consider a very great achievement, and I speak of it here because we shall thus hope to secure in the largest degree the hearty co-operation also of the scholars, the thinkers, and the ministers, of the English Unitarian Church. On both sides of the Atlantic I think the Unitarian body, as never before, is striving after the real fundamental unities ; not so much to prove that the Apostle Peter was a Unitarian or that the Apostle Paul was a Unitarian. It is a fact that the founder of the Meadville Theological School was converted to Unitarianism by simply reading the New Testament, and I frequently tell my Methodist friends in that place that the New Testament was simply a Unitarian pamphlet written early, before the name was known. But we don't teach in the school that the Apostle Peter was a Unitarian, or that the Apostle Paul was. We are satisfied if, following the lead of our own conscience and reason we are Unitarians, and we are quite satisfied in addition to that if we can bring such great names as Channing and Parker and Martineau to the defence of our faith. I doubt not, one of the Unities on which your hearts are set in this country, as with us, is the unity of social reform ; and I am glad I can say to my classes at Meadville that we are on very firm ground there. I tell them it is a happy thing that the Unitarian body discovered this world quite a number of years ago as the scene of man's activity, as the scene on which he is to put forward all his powers ; and that any future world can take care of itself in its turn. One world at a time is enough for any human being, and if another world comes he will have no claim on it if he has not given his attention to this. The unity of all kinds and classes and conditions of men, that is the great unity, of far more importance than the unity or the trinity taught in the New Testament by Peter or Paul or James or John, in my humble opinion. There is a unity of the spirit, and we advance this social reform unity by living in that spirit, and it is because Dr. James Martineau was the greatest illustration to the world of this century of that spiritual unity, that I say in closing how profoundly we have been touched and moved by the news of his departure. We, too, have lost great leaders, and have thanked God for them and gone on ; and you will do the same. The days of prophets are not numbered ; God will never leave Himself without witnesses. We respected Dr. Martineau, but not because we all in America accepted his metaphysics or his ethics. I have been told by several persons of authority, since I came over, that Dr. Martineau loved nobody better than the man who expressed candid dissent from his own opinions and discussed them calmly with him. Such, I think, would be the duty of more than one American Unitarian. Professors of ethics in our theological schools do not accept his ethics as a system or code of belief ; but who could resist respecting the spirit, who could resist following the example, if he knew it, of that great and beautiful life ? There is no man in this later world's history, the history

of the nineteenth century, who will stand to the world to come as a greater example of the nobility of the spirit in life, no greater name, no greater influence than that of James Martineau. It seems perhaps a little curious choice to quote from Rudyard Kipling about Dr. Martineau, but there are some lines of Kipling's which occur to me and which are most fitting, I think, to apply to such a great loss, because they express the spirit in which Dr. Martineau lived.

Only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame ;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame !
But each for the joy of the working, and each in his separate star,
Shall draw the thing as he sees it, for the God of things as they are.

What is that but what Dr. Martineau said again and again? He declared the difference between the partisan of beliefs and the man whose heart is set upon reality to be world-wide. If we set our hearts upon reality, brothers and sisters of the Unitarian faith, however few we may be—if the present is not ours, the future will be. If the Mivarts of to-day can say what Dr. Martineau said seventy years ago, let us say what we believe to be true, and perchance in seventy years more the Vatican itself will repeat it.

THE PRESIDENT: We have greatly enjoyed the remarks made to us by Mr. Gilman. The ties between this country and the United States have been drawn closer and closer during recent years, and I am glad to think the ties which bind English Unitarians and American Unitarians are drawing closer too. We have been glad to welcome Mr. Gilman here this month ; and next month we are going to send to the American Conference Miss M. Pritchard and Mr. Bowie, the Secretary of our Unitarian Association.

The company then went downstairs into the lower room to partake of tea. Here the crowding was considerable, and yet, notwithstanding, folks found out old friends and exchanged warm greetings. On subsequent days of the Conference, tea was served in the larger room upstairs, and the arrangements were admirable.

At 6-30 o'clock a COMMUNION SERVICE was conducted in the Great Meeting Chapel by the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., the address being delivered by the Rev. C. C. Coe, F.R.G.S., while the bread and wine were taken round to the congregation by the Revs. H. Gow, B.A., W. Whitaker, B.A., F. Price, H. E. Haycock, Messrs. Clephan, Cooper, Johnson, and Evans. The address and service were very impressive, and the large congregation quite filled the ground-floor and overflowed into the galleries.

At eight o'clock about 1,100 persons assembled in the Temperance Hall for a *Religious Service*, of which the devotional part was conducted by the Rev. H. Gow, B.A., who read as a lesson *Isaiah* xlii. 1-9, *I Cor.* i. 10-17, iii. 1-9. The Choir sang Sullivan's Anthem, 'Send out thy light.' The Sermon was preached by the Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A., and was as follows:—

OUR WORK FOR THE COMMON CAUSE.

Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.—1 CORINTHIANS i. 10.

So wrote Paul to the little community at Corinth, which he had won for Christ by eighteen months assiduous preaching. It was only three or four years they had existed as a Christian Church, and already there were divisions among them. Paul had his adherents, and Peter and Apollos each had theirs, and there were those who made a party name even of him whom all owned alike, through whose gospel they had all been won to God. So the Apostle beseeches, argues, exhorts, effaces his own personality and abates the dignity of his office, if haply he may win them back to unity, that they might call themselves henceforth after no other name but Christ's, and all call themselves by his name: that 'We are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' might be the sufficient bond of a perfect union. Paul's entreaties availed little; true, we hear no more of these particular parties against which he so earnestly protested. But only a generation later, under leaders more willing and less reputable than Apostles, the spirit of party still was rampant, and the divisions of this Church were, as Clement tells us, the grief, the scandal, and the danger of Christianity at large.

Years went on, and the world became Christian. Rome turned to worship the Christ she had mocked; and the nations once subject to her, and barbarian tribes who had maintained a fierce independence of her sway, all together bowed before the same Lord and called themselves by his name. And on this all churches were

agreed, that the counsel of Paul was not his own, but spoken by the Holy Spirit, and to be received as the very Word of God; and in this all churches were alike, that they were more or less divided within and at strife with one another. Heedless of the meaning of Paul's exhortation, even while they worshipped the letter of it, Christians distinguished themselves from Christians by assuming party names to themselves, or by imputing them to the disrepute of those to whom they were opposed. 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,' might be taken as the brief summary of ecclesiastical history from the beginning till now. The principle of division and discord is ever present; while only the persons, whose names are used or abused to sanction it, vary from age to age. And to-day, when the Christian Church stands upon the threshold of the twentieth century since its founder's birth, to-day the divisions are more numerous than they have been before; sects form themselves apart, less savage against one another than of old, but not less determined each of them to maintain its separate existence:—more than one as presumptuous as ever in the loud proclamation of itself as sole proprietor of the ordinary means of grace, and divinely appointed Custodian of the whole Truth of God.

'In one spirit were we all baptized into one body,' writes St. Paul. 'I believe in the communion of saints,' is the earliest confession of Christian faith, and that communion the later creed of Nicene explains to be the 'one Catholic and Apostolic Church.' Such is the theory of Christianity; but history gives us no choice except either to recognize as One Communion those who refuse all communion with each other, or else to choose among many bodies a single one which shall alone have the right to take to itself the title 'Church of God,' by which Paul designates the Christian community of his day.

To the latter alternative many have inclined; it seems so simple and so logical, and offers a solution of all religious difficulties by the acknowledgment of a living authority, arbiter of differences, and guardian of revealed truth. Only the Facts are against it—the works by which faith is shown and proved, without which the boast of true faith is vain; these are not of any one church, but are found in every Christian body, and distinguish as Christ's the Society of Friends equally with the Little Sisters of the Poor.

We are forced, then, to this conclusion, inept as at first sight it may appear, that 'we who are many,' not many individuals merely but many in opinion, in faith, and in practice, that we are all somehow 'one body.' Some call themselves, or are called, after the names of men—Calvinists, Arminians, Wesleyans, Socinians. Some get their names from a conspicuous tenet they agree to affirm or deny, as in our own case, who cannot escape the Unitarian name, however reluctant we may be to be so labelled. Others are named by their form of government, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians; and others from places with which they are chiefly connected, Rome, or Greece, or England. What are these, all of them, but varied forms of the old party names? Paul and Apollos and Cephas, over again? And now, as of old, are some who try to escape all sects by owning no other name than Christ's, and yet do not and cannot succeed. For they are still what they are, whether they avow or whether they deny the name. The English Evangelical, the Italian or Spanish Roman Catholic, the liberal Unitarian—all would use the Christian name as their own; but each uses it in his own peculiar sense, and by no means will agree to that intended by the others. And we are forced to admit that there is no legitimate party of Christ now, any more than there was in Corinth; and if any insist upon the name, our answer is Paul's own, 'Is Christ divided? If any trusts in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that even as he is Christ's, so also are we.' The name is common to us all; yet does it so apply as not to heal our differences or unite us before the world.

For in truth, what Paul demanded was too much for human frailty, and in the very terms of his expostulation he betrays the exorbitance of his claim, 'When one says, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men?' Even so, dear saint of God, and thou thyself not exalted above human infirmity! We are men, and impossible is it, as all history has shown, that we should ever be 'of the same mind and the same judgment,' and there be no division among us. We are, indeed, men; and it means that we are short-sighted and ignorant, and liable to error, and prone to obstinacy and vanity and self-assertion, and confident withal of

ourselves and our opinions. Our virtues as well as our vices divide us against one another; our learning sides with our ignorance to perpetuate dispute. In vain has the way of compromise been tried. It has never been large enough to include all, and of necessity must exclude those who believe in a definite historic revelation from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing can be added. Equally in vain has it been tried by the assertion of divine authority to compel all into one fold, for there always have been and will be a few or many who do not and cannot submit their judgment, though it is in the name of God their fellows adjure them.

There are divisions among us, as there were at Corinth; they are many and deep and wide, and as it seems at present hopeless of filling up or of bridging over. Attempts have, indeed, been made in our day to draw closer together the various churches which come under the common designation of Evangelical Dissent. For whatever success has rewarded the persistent efforts we are thankful, and we rejoice that the good work done by our brethren is made easier and more efficacious by their union. But how little hope is there of any drawing together of the older churches, or of more than a bare toleration being secured by those who are like ourselves further off from the general agreement! Shall we, in a hundred years hence, have come to an agreement? Shall all then belong to one church, or all recognize as good and wise the variety of churches? Shall we all partake of the same outward sign of the inward grace which is common to all?

Nay, I venture to prophesy that in a thousand years hence the same great divisions will cleave the Christian world as now. For it is by nature, as well as by thought and training, that men are Catholic or Protestant, High Church or Evangelical, Unitarian or Orthodox.

But I am no prophet, and my prophecy is of no worth. I take the facts of to-day and to-morrow—facts quite independent of our judgment on them, whether we approve them as natural and salutary, or condemn them as a violation of God's purpose. And I ask,—What can we do? What should be our attitude towards the many Churches divided against one another, and united only against us?

Against them we cannot unite; for they compel our sympathy and respect so that we must needs wish them God-speed in their work, even while they stand aloof from us and bid us keep our distance. If now and again we are stirred to wrath by some grosser act of intolerance or injustice, and are tempted to denounce their false doctrine and bigotry, we are speedily brought to reason by the consideration of our own remissness and their energy, and the curse our lips were fain to utter is changed into a blessing. For we are as liable to error, as prone to self-assertion and dogmatism, as they are; and are they not in zeal for God examples to us, in labours for the common weal our rivals, in learning no whit our inferiors? We can in no wise affect to despise the fellowship we are refused, nor make light of that communion of saints from which we are excluded. The loss to us is very serious, the pain of it is sorely felt by many.

Shall we, then, sue for reunion, and humbly desire conditions of peace? But we know already what they will be, and we know them to be such as it is impossible for us to accept. For our convictions are not subject to choice, that we can form them at command, or alter them to suit even our spiritual interests; nor do we deem it lawful to withhold expression of them for the sake of greater usefulness any more than for the sake of position or gain.

We must needs, then, remain Dissenters from orthodox Dissent, and Protestants against popular Protestantism; the minority of a minority, tracing back a thin and broken line of ancestry till we find ourselves firmly grounded in the Unitarian declaration of the great founder of Christianity. 'One there is who is good—if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments.'

But have we no office in the Church Universal? Is there nothing we may do for Christendom and mankind? no truth committed specially to our keeping? Must we resign ourselves to be, as the Gibeonites, 'hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation,' but never presume ourselves to claim 'part in the Lord,' or right of worship in the common sanctuary? Ours to serve in Parliament and on Town Councils and Committees, to look after the health and welfare of the people at large, but to hold back

our hands from the Ark of the Covenant, and admit ourselves unworthy of religious fellowship? No! a thousand times No! We will not stay to count heads, or waste time in bewailing deserters, or hesitate lest our voice sound a childish treble when raised against the mighty chorus of Churches unanimous in nothing else but to condemn us. We have our part in Christendom, we have our witness to bear for the integrity of the Universal Faith.

The late Dr. Hort, Lady Margaret Professor at Cambridge, once wrote to me: 'The body to which you belong, and yourself therefore as one of its representatives, has a work to do for the great common cause. Whether acknowledged by others or not, it contributes its share to the fulness of Christian progress.' I cherish the words as coming from one whose orthodoxy has never been called in question, and whose sound judgment and deep learning have won the universal respect of Bible students. Yes, we have a work to do, not for our own communion only,—as if to increase in numbers and influence were an end in itself,—but for 'the great common cause,' for the advancement of truth and righteousness on earth.

Nor can it, I think, be doubtful what our special department of work is. It is not to argue and show the falsity of doctrines from which we differ. It is our misfortune that now and again we are forced into controversy, and are driven to attack those whose position we would gladly leave in peace; but this is not our business as a Church. We are militant indeed; but our warfare is not against our brethren and their cherished beliefs, but against the world and its insidious spirit—against the greed of gain, the love of pleasure, the reckless competition which are the ruin of men's souls. Our negations come to the front because there is so vast a majority opposed to us, and we are bound to make clear why it is that we stand apart and submit to be lonely and few amid the hosts of Christendom. It is our misfortune more than our fault that the name by which we are known has lost its true significance of belief in the Unity of God, and has come to imply disbelief in the Trinity. But there is no strength in negation, nor bond of union, nor principle of growth; and I am persuaded that the weakness of our group of churches

proceeds mainly from this,—that we deny more than we affirm, that the thought of what we do not believe is always present to our minds, and what we do believe is to very many dubious and vague.

Yet it is faith alone which is life and power. The profession of opinion makes a school of philosophers or politicians; the conviction of truth as the illumination and salvation of souls constitutes a Church. The grain of sand may be very like the grain of mustard seed, of the same size and weight and colour, but the difference is one of kind. It is alive the tiny seed, and has in it therefore almost infinite potentialities; the sand can have no future but to be divided and worn down to finer atoms, or at the best to remain buried and undisturbed from age to age. What is our inner life, our faith as a Church? Or are we a heap of sand, not seed at all?

What do we believe? What do we teach?

We have no profession of faith like other churches; and if we were prepared to adopt one, it would not be accepted from me, or even from one of far greater authority among us. It would have to be a joint production, and the attempt to frame it would prove once more how great among us is the love of freedom, and how small the agreement in doctrine.

Assuredly I will not propose to you a creed or confession, nor will I venture even to state what articles of religion they may be on which we can be supposed for the present agreed. But one thing I venture to affirm without fear of contradiction.

WE BELIEVE IN GOD!

‘Of course we do!’ Yes, of course, because as Homer witnessed of old, ‘all men stand in need of the gods’; and writes Cicero, ‘since a steadfast unanimity continues to prevail among all men without exception, it must be admitted that the gods exist.’ We dissent from the all but unanimity of Christians, we cannot dissent from the unanimity of the human race. We believe in God, nor are we called upon to justify our faith as reasonable, or find old arguments or new in its favour. We are sufficiently founded on the old maxim, ‘*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*,’ the round world is not agreed in vain.

But who, or what is God? For still it is true, as Cicero said was the case in his time, 'that there is no question on which there is such marked disagreement, or opinions so various and so opposite.' Yet thus much we may safely say, that each man's conception of God is the measure of his own capacity of thought and feeling, and that the highest conception ever formed by mortal mind falls short of the truth as far as the finite is short of Infinite. For the supreme God is One than whom no greater can be conceived; One who has all perfection we can imagine, and who is all that the wisest and best of men can be, and is more than all. One, therefore, who is good and just and mighty and wise, who knows and thinks and wills and loves, but all in some incomparably higher way, transcending our highest flight of thought. One, too, who is concerned with us and our doings and sufferings; for not to know were ignorance, not to care were indifference, and these defects of ours cannot be in the All-Perfect. 'We too are his offspring,' and our hearts cry out for Him, and if an earthly father heeds his children's cry, how much more shall the Father in Heaven attend our call and provide for us even before we ourselves know our wants or think to make them known to Him.

Nor does it detract in any way from the awful significance of this truth, that it is common, that all are agreed upon it. God is: God knows: God cares:—all who call themselves Christians, all among us who make any profession of religion admit so much. But if only one man in all the world knew and believed it, the fact would still subsist and would be all important: that the belief is shared by the human race strengthens our conviction of its truth, but neither adds to nor takes away from the infinite fulness it implies.

It is the One Truth, Universal, Eternal. It always was, always will be; is everywhere true. If intelligent beings inhabit Mars, or planets which revolve round other suns than ours, it is as true for them as for us, concerns them equally with us. It was true ten million years ago, when Earth was a fiery globe; it will be so ten million years hence, when it still speeds its lone way, the dead satellite of a cold sun. God was not, God will not be, but Is. God alone is not here, not there, but One in all space as in all time. It

is the Truth, in the contemplation of which man, too, soars above the limits of Time and Space ; and all other truths are lost to his view, as stars, which shine bright in the darkness, but lose themselves and disappear in the light of the rising sun. It is the One Truth on which men are agreed, who disagree on all things else.

How vastly different men are among themselves ! In features, complexion, character, stature of mind and body, in customs and clothes, and every respect under which we regard them, they are unlike. But under all is the same broad food-producing earth, and over all arches the same star-lit heavens. So, too, is it with their religions. Doctrines and forms are many and ever varying, and those held most sacred by some are ridiculed by others, those held to be absolutely essential to-day were unknown of old : men cannot believe alike, cannot even pray together. But the same Providence supports all, sending his rain and causing his sun to shine on just and unjust, on orthodox and misbeliever ; the same God is over all, claiming for himself all sincere worship, under whatever name it be addressed.

I would deny nothing, dear brethren, which any of you cherish as helpful to the spiritual life. I would diminish nothing from the importance of any doctrine we commonly hold by as Christian men. But I do assert the supreme importance of this fundamental truth, which denied all is lost, the world becomes an immense self-acting machine, history a meaningless succession of phenomena, and the individual a mere by-product of forces which ignore him.

And this truth is in danger among men, always, indeed, has held its own with difficulty, and been recognized only when disguised. In old time they worshipped a multitude of divinities, with the One God dimly discerned in the far distance or not discerned at all. Now, too, as a High Church Bishop tells us, is ‘there a secret and half-conscious danger in the Church of making an exaggerated Trinity, danger lest the Father should be removed out of sight, out of mind, out of reach, and the Son take his place.’¹ There is danger lest he who taught us to pray to the Father, and trust and love Him above

¹ ‘The Parish Priest in the Town,’ by the Bishop of Truro.

all, should himself (by our fault, not his) hide the Father from us, and take the place of the God he revealed, danger lest three Gods take the place of the One.

The Gospel, according to Paul, contained doctrines which have been the subject of endless dispute, but this was the beginning of his preaching and the end of all his theories, 'the good tidings that ye should turn from vain things to the living God.' Never has the Christ had so devoted a servant, so enthusiastic a lover, but never with him is the face of God hidden or His sole glory obscured. The consummation of all things is, according to his gospel, the subjection of all to the Son and of the Son to the Father; and even now, he says, as we are Christ's, so Christ is God's: and 'as the head of every man is Christ,' *i.e.*, as Christ is supreme over all men, 'so is God the head of Christ.' I am not quoting these as Unitarian texts, or seeking to put any other interpretation upon them than what I believe all will admit, nay that of the Apostle himself—'that God may be all in all,' above Church, above Bible, above Christ, within us and without us, close to us as the air we breathe, intimate as our own souls. Oh! for some revival of that old experience, 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God?' And again, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Experience, rarer it seems to me in these times than it was of old, but still cherished among us, and we might almost dare to say the peculiar treasure of our small society.

'Let another praise thee and not thine own mouth: a stranger and not thine own lips,' says the Hebrew proverb; and therefore I gladly accept the witness of one who was an entire stranger to us and denied the possibility of 'really cordial intercourse' between such as we are and men of his own views. 'In many Unitarian writings,' said the Vicar of St. Mary's, Cambridge, some years ago, 'just as in some Unitarians I have known, there is a passionate earnestness of devotion which is most striking—a sense of awe in the presence of God. The hymn "Nearer my God to thee" is an

illustration of this. When we recognize this reverence we may well desire to emulate them in it.'

That hymn is the chief contribution of Unitarianism to Christian hymnology, and there are not a few of like kind which have been accepted from us for the use of all the Churches. The fact is more eloquent than any words. It points out to us how we, few and insignificant, may serve and help and defend the cause of true religion. Ours to witness for God, to fear Whom is the beginning of wisdom, to see Whom is the consummation of desire; God the first and the last, from Whom all things proceed, and to Whom all things return, in drawing near to Whom all the discipline of life's pleasures and pains finds its meaning, God whom all need and in the worship of whom all are united, even though they try to keep apart.

For all real worship is a drawing nearer to God, who is spirit, in spirit. And those who draw near to God must needs draw nearer to each other. Bodies may keep to different places, lips may repeat divergent formulas, but souls praying truly are moving to the same centre, even though they come from far distant points of the great circumference, and seem to be tending in opposite directions. This is the true communion of saints, this is the essential unity of the Catholic Church throughout the world. The only communion and unity which is possible at present, or perhaps ever will be possible while we worship on earth. And for this communion in spirit, this unity in God, we witness among the Churches, and pray with those who will not pray with us, and preach with Peter that 'in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him.' (*Acts* x. 35.)

Acceptable to God! poor, weak, sinful men that we are, how grand the ambition! to be nearer to God, in thought, word and deed more like to him—and to draw the world He loves nearer with us—were not this the noblest aim we could set before ourselves? the grandest work 'twere possible to conceive? And this we may attempt each and all; to this direct all our efforts; and so doing we shall rise above the troubles which now beset us, above the region of visible success and failure, of quarrel and controversy, into the peace of God which is strength and gladness and all-conquering love.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND DAY.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4TH, 1900.

AT ten o'clock a DEVOTIONAL SERVICE was conducted in the Temperance Hall by the Rev. E. L. H. Thomas, B.A., a large congregation being present.

Following this, the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A., LL.D., delivered an address on 'JAMES MARTINEAU,' when the Hall was filled with an attentive and enthusiastic audience.

ADDRESS ON 'JAMES MARTINEAU.'

It is a difficult yet a pleasant task which is imposed on me by the invitation of this Conference—pleasant, for I loved and revered the public character and work of James Martineau, and difficult, because I knew so little of him in private. What I knew was full of charm, but it was not much. I made a late entrance into the fold of which he was the shepherd. I did not grow up as a lamb under his care, nor follow his guidance over the hills of philosophy or the mild meadows of theology. Others were told what grass to eat or to avoid, at what brooks to drink, how to shelter from the storms, how to beat back the wolves—not I. That wise and tender training I missed, and I have regretted that it was not mine. I am not able, then, to speak as fitly of him as those students and friends who have always belonged to him, lived with him, and watched, in a more inner circle than I had the right to enter, his declining years and his accomplished labours. I never heard him lecture. I heard him preach once in Little Portland Street Chapel, but so long ago that I do not recall the matter of his sermon, and only that his delivery was not equal to his thoughts. Once I heard him make a speech, and was delighted with its grasp, its arrangement, its

ease of expression, its dignity and its eloquence, and thought he might have made an admirable debater; but I doubted whether he would have made a convincing debater. The speech was chilled by being too literary, too finished, too elaborate in style, too unbroken by natural passion to persuade—and it failed to persuade the meeting. I confess I have found the same over-finish and its correlative want of spontaneity in many of his prayers and sermons. This is all I knew of him as teacher, preacher, or speaker, and it is plain that from these infinitesimal data I have no right to make any particular inferences. Ignorance supplies no ground for personal criticism. You will then, I trust, pardon all that may seem ill-advised in the speech of one who for the greater part of his life had no knowledge, save a public knowledge, of James Martineau.

The first thing that struck a stranger introduced to him was his graciousness. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, was in his heart, and it lit his countenance. His quiet eyes, recalled from far-off ways to meet the moment; his smile like that of a child still near to the Imperial Palace; the offer of his hand which seemed to speak a welcome, were all instinct with that graciousness which arises from natural springs in the heart—from thoughtfulness for others, from humility, and self-forgetfulness. I never met a man in whom humility was so natural. Its presence in all his ways convinced vain men of their fault, and led them to redeem themselves from vanity more than any blame would have done. It showed them how beautiful was humility, and they followed its shining. I think that self-pridefulness was impossible to him. He may have smiled to himself in congratulation when he finished a well-built sentence or a well-rounded piece of dialectic, but this was with the pleasure of an artist, not with vanity—for, indeed, he had gone too far into the infinitudes of thought and form to think that any work of his was worthy of self-praise. He who sees, like Martineau, the Eternal Ideas, and sees them moving from an absolute Will of Righteousness through the spiritual, moral, and physical creation, cannot have any pride in his own work. No one can tell what power to help, inspire

and bless this absence of self-thinking and feeling has communicated to the characters and work of those who knew him, and, in another way, to those who have read his books and his character in them. For this lowliness of heart is a part of Self-forgetfulness—that mighty energy of the spiritual universe, which, when it takes form in a man's soul, acts in a thousand diverse manners for the redemption, development, and perfecting of men.

You who listen to me must recall a hundred instances of this gracious thoughtfulness shown to you. I recall one specially shown to myself. I happened to visit him one day shortly after I left the Church, and before my first administration of the Holy Communion. 'I do not know,' he said, 'if I can join in your Communion Service. I have not seen it, and I am not aware as yet of your views on the matter.' 'Well,' I answered, 'I will send you the printed service, and I shall preach on the subject, and then you will do as you think fit.' The day came, and Martineau, after the sermon, took special pains to be the first person to receive from my hands the bread and wine. A large number were present, and the effect of this gracious act convinced them that our leader gave me his brotherly support; but I think it was more a private kindness on his part than a public support. He would certainly, in his humility, think of the former and not of the latter. However that may be, the thoughtful trouble he took to be first at the table, the kindly graciousness of his attitude, I have never forgotten and never will forget. The fine flower of courtesy was there—that courtesy which men forget so often or think needless, but which, nevertheless, has far more redeeming, helping and impelling power over the hearts and lives of men than a host of good deeds roughly done or good books written without graciousness. It is wise to pray that the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, as it was on the life and manners of James Martineau.

Alongside of this, and perhaps balancing it, there was a certain apartness in him, which checked boldness, called to order flippancy of thought, rebuked all moral carelessness, and ministered to reverence. A feeling kindred to awe, but modified by his kindness, fell in his presence on anyone who treated lightly,

either in act or speech, the high demands of conscience, intellectual truth, or the sanctity of the human affections. 'Thou shalt not take the character of the Lord thy God in vain,' was deeply rooted in his nature. Even those who felt with him on these lofty matters shared in this feeling, for they understood how far more than they he lived in the difficult air of these mighty powers. There was, then, a certain remoteness in Martineau, as of one who moved at times outside of humanity, who loved indeed humanity, and for the most part went in and out among men, but who retired when it pleased him over the border into the regions of the Absolute, where the great Ideas walk and rest in their valleys, and the primal spiritual Presences breathe intellectual clearness, moral peace, and Love's infinite perfection. This sense of reverence has fallen on me from time to time when I have read passages in his writings in which, with reiterating expansion, he developed his conception of the moral Imperative in human nature, and opened it, by successive arguments, into necessary union with God.

But it was not only by his work in the world of morals that I was thus impressed. The same awe fell on me one day, when in a sober autumn evening I read in a provincial garden an essay of his, addressed solely to the reasoning faculty, in which he strove by a series of arguments, interlaced like a fugue, and mounting step by step, to realise an intellectual conception of the Deity.

I have never believed that we can reach, by purely intellectual means, a realisation of God. Only love, incapable of ending or of limitation, can unite itself, in conscious joy, with the endless and illimitable Godhead. But as I read this noble argument, piled like Ossa on Pelion and Olympus on Ossa, it seemed to reach into Heaven itself, and to image God for the intellect alone. This was a strange experience for me, a revelation of regions of Being in which I had not moved. I had, naturally, believed in God as pure Thought, but I had never seen Him by thought alone. And now it appeared possible; and

so strong was the impression, that God Himself seemed to be beside me in the garden.

In both these oceans of human activity, in that of morals and in that of intelligence, the genius of Martineau had power to lift a tidal wave on which we were borne upwards—till we were left, as it ebbed, under the throne of God, and looking into the light of His countenance. Thus he took us into the infinite of God with himself. Indeed, no conviction was stronger in him than that of man's natural infinitude in God, and he instilled into us this conviction. It is one of his best legacies to men. Our world, in spite of the preaching of death, has begun to feel through him, as in another fashion it felt through Browning, that our destiny, our being's heart and home, is with the illimitable and the eternal, with deathless hope and life—

Effort and expectation and desire,
And something evermore about to be.

Well, this greatness of his set him somewhat apart, not by his own desire, from ordinary men and women. He whose thoughts wander through eternity cannot help being solitary. He does not wish to be companionless, but those less inured to thought as it spreads undivided and operates unspent, less near to the deep sources of moral power in God, cannot accompany him in these dread excursions beyond the flaming walls. No one who knew Martineau but has seen this apartness in his face, from time to time, as of one far withdrawn into the spaceless and timeless world. Then, his countenance was still; the soul had left it on travels of discovery. It looked as if carved in marble—

'The silent image of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.'

And now, leaving this impression of his work in the moral and intellectual regions, I have something to say of his work in that spiritual region, by the powers of which we hunger and thirst for absolute love and beauty, and are filled with them; by which we reach after infinite perfection in holiness and its peace; by which we claim personal union and communion with God

Himself; and in which we transcend in aspiration all that the senses disclose, the intellect shapes, or the conscience demands—the world where Man, the Son, knows himself directly in the Father, and knows the Father directly in himself.

I do not think that Martineau realised his powers in that world or that world itself, as fully as he realised the intellectual and moral worlds or his powers in them. His writings, I allow, seem to contradict this view of mine. He expresses in them, and over and over again, his profound conviction that the nearest approach to God is through Love in us yearning to be at one with the absolute Love from whence it came, through the passion of our imperfect righteousness to attain its perfection, through the desire of the storm-wearied soul for the clearness of God's peace, and through the strife of the baffled Being within us to find absolute joy. On these, and many other aspects of the spiritual life, he dwells continually, not only in his sermons but also in his philosophical writings. And where best he dwells on them is in those passages of singular and reverential beauty in which he explains and loves the character and doings of Jesus Christ.

But the proclamation of this conviction, deep as it was—that the last and highest way to the Father was through the Spirit—was not so easy and natural for him as the proclamation of the way to God through the intellectual and moral paths on which he moved as a monarch, and at home. I do not mean that he is not at home in the spiritual mansions, but that he is less at home in them than in those built by the intellect and the moral sense.

I feel this lesser *Heimlichkeit* chiefly in his style. In passages dealing with intellectual or moral subjects the style is easy, noble, natural, weighty with matter, ornamented, but not too much; and there are many such passages which are masterpieces of English writing. They well up, with the clearness of a mountain spring, out of his nature. But in the passages and sermons on the spiritual life and its powers the style is not so natural. A certain effort appears in it, and labours, often heavily, to reach clear expression. It is over-adorned, and the excess of ornament produces a sense of chillness. When the writing seems impassioned

and desires to be so, it rarely penetrates, as the pure spiritual imagination does, into the heart of the thing described. Those who read these elaborate passages are moved, but not deeply moved. They are moved by their sense of the writer's strong conviction that what he says is true. They are not deeply moved by the things said, not half so deeply moved as they have been by his work on the things of God seen by the intellect and the conscience.

I think this view is true, but I put it forward with diffidence. I believe that he arrived at the close-fibred convictions he had concerning the predominance of the things of the spirit, by passing first through the things of the intellect and the conscience in their relation to God; but that is not the path the man takes to whom the things of the spirit are natural, and therefore expressed with ease and passion. Such a man, like the writer of the Gospel of St. John, first lives in the spirit, and then, from the spirit, realises God in the conscience and the intellect. Martineau, on the other hand, was led to the spiritual life by discovering where the conscience and the intellect failed in finding the last and highest truths of God and man.

It is for that reason, I think, that he had not, in his work, the spiritual world under his command as fully as he had the intellectual and moral worlds. In fact, he was not born with a large and piercing imagination, nor with the deep emotions of a mystic. There are many criticisms, for instance, on the story of Christ in the Gospels which he would not have made had he by nature possessed those qualities. Moreover, I think that if he had possessed those qualities he would have known more of the passions, sins, and sorrows of men and women, and spoken to them more vitally than it seems to me he does in his books. There, also, he was somewhat apart from humanity.

It is not without a further intention that I have dwelt upon this view. It leads me to a special observation concerning the battle he fought for us against that tendency to exclude God from nature and humanity which has prevailed in English society of every class for the last sixty years. Having to be a General in that battle, it was just as well for us that he did not possess, in their fuller forms, the

spiritual powers. They frequently, except in their highest types, blunt the keenness of the intellect, and dim the clearness of moral demands. And what we most wanted in theology and religion, for the last sixty years, was a man of the finest intellectual power and of the deepest moral convictions, who should believe not only in God, but also that the human intellect and conscience, with all their workings, were only to be fully explained, and given their full exercise, in the realm of that belief. We needed a man who, in the sphere of the pure intellect and of the personal and social conscience, should boldly meet the foes of the spiritual world in man. We needed one who should do this, not by emotional appeals addressed only to the spirit in us—the existence of which spirit was denied by our adversaries—but by clear reasoning addressed to the intellect, and logically mounting up to God from the known facts of conscience. There were many who, under the sway of Science and of Criticism, tended to get rid of God as needless, of the soul as a figment, and of immortal life as a superstition. ‘There is no intellectual proof,’ it was said, ‘of these things, and the religion which belongs to them has done moral harm to the progress of mankind. Let us put them aside, and live without them.’ ‘I accept,’ said Martineau, ‘your intellectual and ethical ground, and from that I start my argument for God, for the soul, and for its infinity in Infinite Love. I accept, and with pleasure, all that science has proved, and I know what it has proved. I give its full weight to the work of the pure intellect; but, though I find much in it which dissolves orthodox beliefs, I find nothing in it which dissolves the idea of God or of the eternal soul of Man. I accept all the well-founded conclusions of historical criticism on the story of Christianity, but the spirit of Christ’s teaching and the life he lived remain untouched by that criticism. I meet, in your region of the intellect and of the conscience, the denial of God, of the soul, and of the religious truths bound up with God’s Fatherhood with a decided contradiction.’ And he argued that contradiction on the chosen ground of his opponents, on the ground of Reason and Morals, of Philosophy and Ethics, with a success which the world more and more confesses, and with so triumphant a joy in his argument, that he sometimes passes into a

humorous mockery of his adversaries, like a fencer so sure of his skill in a duel that he chaffs his opponent as he fights. A man of this philosophic power, rather than a man of spiritual mysticism, was, I repeat, what we most needed in the long struggle of the last sixty years; and the victory which the ideas of God, and the Soul, and Immortality are now beginning to secure over their enemies, is largely due to Martineau's stern and quiet leadership, under the banners of the intellect and the conscience, of the soldiers of religion. He taught, strictly within the realms of philosophy and criticism, that all science begins and ends in God; that all ethics begin and end in God; and that without the postulate of the soul in man akin to God and going to Him, science and ethics have no secure foundation. No other man has done this needful work so firmly or so clearly as he has done. Even the Church of England, with its cry, 'Can any good thing come out of the Unitarian Village?' has been goaded into dim confessions of his use.

On the whole, I have no doubt that the battle is practically won against the forces of godless science and godless ethics, and that Martineau has been the best builder, among many others, of a religion, bound up with Jesus Christ, rooted in the confession of the Fatherhood of God, which is agreeable to reason, and in full accordance with the ethical progress of man in history. He has done this because he was a master in the intellectual and moral, rather than in the spiritual world. But he would not have done it, had he not also lived, loved, and believed in the Spirit.

And more and more, when he had fought out the fight, and his intellectual and moral work was done, he came to abide in the world of the Spirit, closer and closer to the everlasting peace and love; so that his life reached fulness of being. Nor can I express that better than in his own words, written indeed in the midst of the battle, but felt, as many passages in his later writings testify, more and more profoundly, as age deepened, and the light of the purer spiritual world filled his heart with a nearer radiance: 'In the trembling of age and the stealthy approaches of the last sleep, the dear presence of an almighty Guardian, to whom age is as childhood, and who unites the future with the past, fills the deepening shadows

with a mild and holy light. Let Him only be near ; and the obscuring veil of mortal ill that sometimes seems to shut us in, and tempts us to believe in nothing but the sad rain, is soon withdrawn, like the cloud lifting itself from out the glen ; and the sunshine first glorifies, then dissipates the haze, leaving the mountain range of immovable goodness and beauty clear against the everlasting sky. So pass the storms away, so deepens the heavenly view, to the soul that will but rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.'

This, then, was the battle he fought, and he had many and effective allies within himself to help him to conquest. He had untiring industry ; a natural instinct which discerned what knowledge could perform, and diligence to learn it ; and his excellent powers of mind, thoroughly and carefully trained from his youth up, were always ready at his beck and call. ' Do this,' he said, and they did it, whatever it was, year after year, without a break, without a weakness. Then he had great quietude of soul, with impetuosity ; strong, even stern, determination of will, with tenderness ; a splendid amalgam for consistent work in life.

No stain of the world rested on him—none of the pride of life, no mean ambition, no craven hope. He comprehended his trust and the work God gave him to do, and to the same—

' Kept faithful with a singleness of aim ;
And therefore did not stop, nor lie in wait
For wealth or honours or for worldly state.'

He looked on all he could see of human life with steadiness and an intellectual sympathy, not swayed hither and thither by transient excitements or depressions in society. His intellect, both synthetic and analytic, enabled him to see life in its parts as parts ; but also to see it whole, as far as his intellectual eye could reach. The great variety of things did not prevent him from finding the central ideas in which all varieties are contained and reconciled, and his grasp of these centres of unity gave him power in public teaching, and brought him that private peace in his soul, so needful for a teacher. He had one sense for moral judgments, and a sure belief in their one Source. He was convinced of One Power, the perfect image of right reason ; of One Energy of Thought in Nature maturing its processes by

steadfast laws; and of One Energy of Love working in humanity, and evolving it into final righteousness and truth. Above all, he was deeply conscious of his own distinct personality in God, and, therefore, of the distinct personality of all his brother men; and out of that arose, first, just reverence for God, for man, and for himself; then absolute detachment from transient and dogmatic theories in religion and philosophy, and finally steady cheerfulness in life and steady movement to his known and well-loved aims.

Such a mind, abiding in a few master-ideas, is nourished into strength by their infinities, sustained in the battle for truth by constant messages from the divine world, knows a central peace amid the agitation of the world, and lives, works, and is wrought upon, for the good and help of mankind.

So the long campaign he fought did not give him much trouble. It lasted all his life, but it was waged when he was eighty years old with the same spirit of faithfulness and hope with which it was begun; for the hand of Age was light upon him and rested on his shoulder like a friend's. Other men complained of the stress of the battle, but it was never a weariness to him,

Whose high endeavours were an inward light,
That made the path before him always bright.

Moreover, though his pleasure in honest fighting was very great, he was not without a serene and quiet country in his soul, where he could always find an hour of refreshment with his divine Friend and Father. Then, too, when serious crises came in the contest, he liked that well. It was not with fearful solemnity that he met them, but with courageous joy. Like Wordsworth's happy warrior, he was then 'happy as a Lover, and attired with sudden brightness, like a man inspired.' He could trust his courage, which was in him not slowly attained but instinctive—one of the roots of his nature; and, finally, of all the weapons with which he fought he had made himself master. He trusted them, he trusted himself, and he trusted God who had made him for the war and given him his arms. Such a warrior is not wearied or depressed by the battle, but cheerful and cheering to his men. And to us he has left, as

part of his legacy, this inspiration, this delight in fighting the good fight of faith. May it abide and grow in us for ever.

Lastly, it is a worthy and full consolation to his family, to his friends, and to us who belong to his Church, that his life and work were a complete whole—a web woven closely throughout, and finished to the last flower in the pattern. What pleased him when he was young, what he projected then, he carried through in a long and active life; moving onward to the end,

From well to better, daily self-surpast.

He, in his humility, was not likely to think of his completeness, but we think it. He finished his great books on philosophy and religion, and then he collected all he thought worth preserving of his occasional essays written in the heat of the battle he fought, and on its crises. Then, and not till then, was his pen laid down, as a veteran lays by his sword. This was a rare experience, a fulness not often given to the sons of men, and it also sets him somewhat apart from common humanity. But it tells us what a human life should be, and sets before us an ideal. Amid their loss, this completeness of life brings a sacred and quiet joy to all who were nearest and dearest to him. It may also have given himself a gentle and well-earned pleasure as he drew near to the life to come. It ought to add to our inward happiness as we contemplate it; for he was our brother in the faith, the sympathiser with our lives, and the Shepherd of us all. It is true that we are not built to win his palm. Many of us are worn with life, baffled by circumstances, unable in the stress even to begin the things we projected in youth; only able, and that hardly, to do what lies before us. These cannot have the delight of completeness; but they thank God, with unselfish joy, that one of them has attained it. It is good indeed to think of it, admire it, and love the man who realised it. And it is still better to think that he, who never thought his work complete—that high and aspiring spirit—rejoices now, with infinite energies, in the vaster work God gives him in the illimitable universe of Love.

CONFERENCE.

At about 11-30 a.m. Mr. E. Clephan, J.P., took the chair, and briefly introduced the subject for discussion, calling upon the Rev. J. E. Odgers, M.A., to read his Paper on

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF OUR FREEDOM
AND FAITH, AND THE
IMPORTANCE OF ITS STUDY.

It is not unusual for a book to have two titles: the first, I believe, not infrequently describes what the author set out to do, the second what he thinks he has done. You have heard the first title of this lecture (for I understood that I was to lecture):—‘The Historical Development of our Freedom and Faith,’ etc. I would add the second on this wise: ‘Or, what is an English Presbyterian?’ I have found it impossible to deal profitably with my allotted subject in the time at my disposal; and I do not now propose to read all I have written. But my opportunity will not have been wasted if I can prevail upon the representatives of the old Nonconformist congregations, like Leicester Great Meeting, to preserve and print the documents of their history—not wasted, indeed, if I can only succeed in waking a little historic interest in some of my friends, to whom the fact that they statedly worship in an ancient Presbyterian chapel seems to mean no more than if one should say, ‘You live in a house once occupied by a Wesleyan.’

It is sufficiently obvious that the arrest of the Reformation, on its intellectual side, brought on its appropriate Nemesis in the form of doctrinal division and revolt. It is not so readily perceived that the political settlements of national and territorial churches, consequent on the renunciation of Papal supremacy, produced their inevitable results in restlessness and reaction. The State, whether embodied in an English king, a German duke, or a Swiss municipality, professed to take over bodily all the jurisdiction that had hitherto been Papal or ecclesiastical. The opposition roused by this assumption, and by consequent practice, has been more operative than any produced by dogmatic differences, in the ecclesiastical

history of this country. It is the same revolt, whether an Elizabethan Puritan complains of the Queen's Injunctions, or a clergyman of our Reformed Church pours contempt on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in our own day. The assumption led, directly, to the Tudor-Stuart theory of the divine right of kings; indirectly, to the divine right of bishops. The opposition to it was embodied in Puritanism, with its two forms—Presbyterianism, demanding a National Church with some power of self-determination and self-reformation; and Separatism, abjuring all relation to state or parish, and seeking to establish a theocratic polity, wherever two or three of like mind were gathered together.

Henry VIII. took up his functions as Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England with great seriousness. In his theory, this was no new departure; he connected it, now with the claim that the Monarchy of England had always been of the nature of Empire, and now, with the consecration that accompanied coronation. When he put his power into commission, Thomas Cromwell was his Vicar-General; he devolved upon him the visitatorial powers of the Supreme Head, *i.e.*, a jurisdiction superior to that of archbishops and bishops. He regarded these dignitaries as the most aggressive of the Popes had affected to regard them. They were persons upon whom the Œcumenical Bishop devolved a *partem sollicitudinis*, a share of the anxiety which was truly all his own. The mind of Henry in the matter is clearly seen in the licence whereby Bonner was appointed Bishop of London, which devolved upon him certain functions from the Supreme Head during its own good pleasure. This same theory holds in the time of Edward VI.; the young king is spoken of in this style:—‘Supreme Head on earth of the Church of England and Ireland, from whose kingly power all authority of decision and jurisdiction of every sort, as well ecclesiastical as secular, flows as from a supreme head—the fount and origin of all official functions within our kingdom.’ This language occurs in a commission addressed to Cranmer, and by it he is allowed to continue to exercise the jurisdiction of his primacy, ‘the Royal munificence,’ it says, ‘inclining an ear to his humble supplication, indulgently recognises his precarious position,’ and renews his licence.

After the Roman-Spanish rule of Mary, the supremacy was invested in Elizabeth as Supreme Governor, not Supreme Head, but by an Act which revived the powers of the Supreme Head Act of Henry VIII., with the addition of a reserve of power to the Crown, and unlimited powers of visiting, reforming, correcting, and amending, which might be (and were) devolved, not to a Vicar-General, but to a High Commission Court. The 'reserve of power to the Crown' not only kept all initiative in the Queen's hands, but it enabled her to paralyse the efforts of bishops and Parliament alike. She stayed for nine years the issue of the Articles of Religion to the Church, because she 'would not suffer these things to be ordered' by Convocation or by Parliament, on the ground that they belonged to 'Her Majesty's Royal authority of supremacy of the Church of England.' She legislated for the Church by Injunctions which the bishops were to enforce. Many of them, old Marian exiles like Jewel and Pilkington, deplored their own helplessness. They wanted to evangelise the country, like Latimer in the days of Edward VI. What the Queen wanted was external uniformity, as little preaching as possible, and 'Laissez-faire.' I must not pause to debate the question, how far she was justified by political considerations. I would only point out that all the types and forms of early Nonconformity were determined by the throttling of the Church by the State, the shutting down of regulation upon every surviving impulse of the spirit of the Reformation. In the early years of Elizabeth's reign, the policy of 'uniformity and no options' led to the Vestiarian Controversy. Certain ministers scrupled the surplice, and called it a 'conjuring garment of the Pope's Church.' The bishops admitted that the wearing of this vestment or that was a thing in itself indifferent; God neither commands it nor forbids it. 'Then why enforce it?' said thirty-seven London ministers who were in prison for non-compliance. 'What authority can make necessary that which Christ has not made necessary in his Church?' The bishops did not relish the answer they had to give. 'The zone of things neutral and in themselves indifferent is the scene of the ecclesiastical legislation of the Protestant State. All such right of action is, in this country,

vested in the Queen; she can at will enforce a thing, and then it is taken, in the view of a loyal subject, out of the category of things indifferent.' 'Nay,' said the ministers, 'no earthly power can alter the nature of things which God hath not commanded nor forbidden.' Out of this emerged the first permanent principle of historical English Nonconformity.

The party of further reformation was not content to be idle; if the bishops would not lead them, they would do something to make the church a living thing in their own parishes. If the impulse did not come from the top, still a foundation should be laid at the bottom for a national church, according to the scriptural model, as they conceived it. Hence the movement in the direction of what Robert Browne afterwards called 'Reformation without tarrying for any.' The first aim was to set up a 'Godly discipline' in each parish, and the main part of the organization for this purpose was the association of Elders with the minister to form a parochial presbytery, such as survived in the kirk session of a Scottish parish. The plan was not novel. It was the one special way in which the Reformed churches of the continent had wrested from the State some power of social and moral jurisdiction. Not without many a struggle; for the Reformed State claimed to say, who did or who did not belong to the Reformed Church; it admitted to, or excluded from, communion. Calvin fought for years against the right of the Council of Geneva to order the administration of the sacrament to whomsoever it pleased. Unless we understand the meaning of this claim of the Church to moral jurisdiction—its desire to deal with the scandalous and the impenitent within its own circle—we shall misjudge the whole disciplinarian movement, and its extreme form in the separatist churches. Discipline was an admitted necessity for a Reformed Church that was to be something more than an appanage of the State. The first Puritans caught holding a conventicle—(Plumbers' Hall, 1567)—deplored that 'no discipline according to the word of God was brought into the church' by the Edwardian reformers. The Edwardian reformers had already deplored it, and the Church of England goes on deploring it every Lent unto this day. Every Ash Wednesday it repeats their words written in 1549—'Brethren, in

the Primitive Church there was a Godly discipline,' . . . 'until the said discipline may be restored again, which is much to be wished': so we read in the Communion (where, however, the particular discipline referred to is only penitential).

Though many of the clergy were credited with the intention to 'erect up their several presbyteries in their own parishes,' I do not know that such a presbytery was ever formally constituted except in the case of Wandsworth, in 1572. But the literature in which the principle of parochial presbyteries is set forth and defended, stamped the whole party with the names of Disciplinarian Puritans, Presbyterians, or 'the Consistorian faction.' The writings of Cartwright especially are noteworthy as enforcing that appeal to Scripture as final and positive law, which was so essentially characteristic of Puritanism. He pushed his argument against all subsidiary authorities and all consideration of usage or expediency in church matters, to the point of denying the existence of any neutral zone and any things indifferent in religious observance. The Bible gives us a Scripture pattern of a church. All that is not therein prescribed is human invention, and must be rejected; and all that is (if not prescribed yet) mentioned in the New Testament in connection with the church, is an essential of the Gospel model. Hence the church must have all the officials named in the Pauline Epistles. The exaggeration of Cartwright's views threw the cause of the self-determination of a living church, and its power to provide for its own exigencies of administration, into the hands of his opponents. The side of reasonable liberty was represented by Whitgift, the most unscrupulous and thoroughgoing of Elizabeth's Episcopal instruments; and by Hooker, whose immortal work, 'Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,' created the best tradition of the English Church.

But Presbyterianism came to stand for another thing,—for a point of doctrine much more operative than the abortive scheme of parochial elderships; not theological doctrine, for, as an early writer on the Articles tells us, there was no difference between the Conformist and the Nonconformist on any matter of religion, until the Puritans put forth their strong Sabbatarian views. Voluntary associations of the clergy for mutual counsel and for the encouragement

of preaching had sprung up in many counties. They were favoured by several bishops, and Grindal, the primate, saw nothing but good in them. He refused to be the Queen's instrument in suppressing them; but suppressed they were. They were called Prophesyings (the New Testament word for preachings). Not till after they were suppressed, when some of the associated clergy continued to meet in a contraband way, was there (as I think) any ground for suspicion that an attempt was thus being made to hold *classical meetings* of presbytery. But if the clergy may not meet, if four or five of them may not come together for a special service, the question arises, — Have they no rights? What is a Presbyter? Is he only a servant of a Lord Bishop, a person with a devolved charge, and a responsibility to those only who are set over him in the State ecclesiastical? Appeal was made to the New Testament, where the words Bishop and Presbyter or Elder, if not used quite interchangeably, yet occur, it was maintained, in such a way as never to suggest that there was a whole difference of order between them. When St. Peter calls himself an Elder, does he mean that he was inferior in order to a Primitive Bishop? Further, it was contended, if in the second age a bishop had a pre-eminence over associated elders, it was only as *primus inter pares*. Hence the doctrine of the *parity of ministers* which began to be preached at Cambridge in 1587-8; hence the doctrine of the Presbyterian Churches of the present day, that there are only two orders,—those of presbyter and of deacon. This Presbyterian doctrine was immediately met by the enunciation of High Episcopal doctrine from the lips of Bancroft, who maintained that a bishop is in order other than the presbyter; that his office is of divine right, and is of the essence of the church. This doctrine, very sparsely espoused during the first twenty years succeeding its first appearance, was destined, as you know, to a high and mischievous career during the eventful years 1620-1640. But already, in 1604, the year of the Hampton Court Conference, James the First had pronounced against the Presbyterianism of his youth, and taken the Episcopate into some sort of partnership, in his celebrated phrase, 'No Bishop, No King.'

The more or less conformable Puritans had never contemplated

any step that should place them outside the Church of England. They held to a national church and to a parochial organization. If they dreamed of measures for reforming church government, their main desire was to bring the bishops into association with their clergy, instead of their being, as they seemed then to be, agents of a secular power ruling the Church *ab extra*. The case was far other with the Separatists, who carried their idea of 'reformation without tarrying for any' a great deal further. They applied to the existing church the test of the Scripture model, and declared it to be wanting in all the requisites of a true church. It had neither truly appointed ministers nor a truly gathered and covenanted people. Its congregations were a mixed multitude, not a communion of saints. Its clergy were appointed by outsiders, not called by the church out of its own fellowship. Every true church, on the contrary, is a church planted and gathered. The particular church, not a national church or an association of churches, is the church of the New Testament. It inherits the promises; it is, in its measure, the body of Christ. Its members, united by a mutual covenant, are members one of another, and with them rests the power of admission and exclusion. They must keep a watchful eye, and purge the Lord's vine of all dead and unfruitful branches. Hence the perpetual reiteration in Separatist literature of that early claim of the Reformed Churches to the right of excommunication. The Separatist, the Independent, and later the Baptist, demanded nothing of the State, but liberty for the like-minded to constitute themselves by covenant into a gospel church. The Presbyterian clung to the idea of a national church with a hierarchy after a more primitive model, and such local organization as should make the particular church co-extensive with the parish. Hence we see why the Independent was, at a later time, content with Toleration; and why the Presbyterian complained of being made a Separatist against his will, and clamoured for Comprehension.

One generation takes us to the England of the Long Parliament. I am not going to dwell on the conditions of the Church under the rule of Laud, or trace that spread of high sacerdotalism in conjunction with Arminian doctrine which almost totally

transformed the character of the Establishment. But I must note that under the mild rule of Laud's predecessor, Archbishop Abbott, there was a preparation in many quarters for the state of things which meets us under the Commonwealth. Many clergymen who scrupled entire conformity, were engaged as lecturers in parish churches, sometimes by arrangement with a non-preaching incumbent, sometimes by corporations, or by trustees. Weekly lectures were carried on (much like the public part of the old prophesyings) by the co-operation of ministers of a particular town or neighbourhood. Thus a number of clergy and laity were kept attached to the church, but still as a party of reform. Laud and the bishops of his school endeavoured to suppress the lecturers, insisting that no one should preach who had not, before doing so, read the whole of the church service, robed in a surplice. And further, during the same period there must have been many efforts at applying existing theories to existing circumstances. John Robinson's church, which went to Leiden and thence to America (the church of the Pilgrim Fathers), was a gathered church within the parish congregation of Scrooby; and I surmise that John Cotton had a 'Presbyterated' church at Boston, Lincolnshire, whence, through him, Boston, Mass., derived its name.

The 'Thorough' policy of personal rule in Church and State brought both to the ground at the feet of the Long Parliament. Laud, who would always rather fight than not, defiantly nailed his colours to the mast in the Canons of 1640, which exasperated the Commons and made Baxter a Nonconformist. Anglican writers often speak as if the Parliament had met in a heat of revengeful passion, and at once proceeded to destroy the Episcopate in the interests of Presbytery. I believe the Presbyterian clergy had no expectation at all of the extreme measures which were to ensue, and certainly there had not been any propaganda in favour of a Presbyterian establishment. Before the abolition of the Episcopate was determined (September, 1642), the future management of the Church had been matter of much discussion in both Houses. The Commons

discussed the plan of administering the Church by a lay commission for each county. The Lords debated a scheme,—which would have satisfied the English Presbyterian then, as it might have done twenty years later,—that of a reduced Episcopacy, and the association of ministers with the bishop in a standing committee for the diocese. This scheme, known as Archbishop Usher's, was supported by Archbishop Williams of York. How probable it is that such a scheme might have been carried, how improbable it is that there was an organized Presbyterian or other party that would have opposed it, is obvious from the language of Sir E. Dering. 'Mr. Speaker, there is a certain new-born, unseen, ignorant, dangerous, desperate way of Independency. Are we for this Independent way? Nay, Sir. Are we for the elder brother of it, the Presbyterial form? I have not yet heard any one gentleman within these walls stand up and assert his thoughts for either of these ways.'

When war broke out, the tide ran hard against Parliament. It appealed to the Scots for help and they made their own terms, including union in the League and Covenant, uniformity of church government in the two countries, and abolition of the Episcopate. The members of both Houses took the Covenant; the Westminster Assembly of divines was called from its work of revising the Thirty-nine Articles, to draw up a Presbyterian scheme for England, and a directory of worship. The Scottish army entered England, and the result was Marston Moor. But nobody in England was in a hurry to carry out the ecclesiastical side of the compact. Nobody cared for Presbyterian Church government; it had the worst of faults, it was un-English. The Dissenting brethren (the five Independents in the Westminster Assembly) fought every detail in the scheme, and Parliament fenced with every plea of urgency put forth by the Scottish Commissioners. In 1645-6, a good number of English counties were mapped out into classical Presbyteries, but I doubt if the organization ever got into complete working order, save in London and Lancashire, and perhaps Shropshire and Essex. In many other cases we have the names of parishes and

ministers arranged according to districts and *classes*, but no record of any activity, except perhaps an ordination. London, which had been thoroughly indoctrinated by the Scottish clerical Commissioners, was the seat of high Presbyterian doctrine, running to the length of the *Jus Divinum* of Presbytery, and the demand (of which we have noticed the significance) that the State should grant to the ministry the power of excommunication. But Parliament was still indifferent. It had checked any overweening assumption on the part of ministers by giving a great preponderance in numbers to the lay elders in every *classis*; and it left the Presbyterian structure without its culmination in a General Assembly, by making itself the court of final appeal from the subaltern bodies. The impression one gets from reading the extant minutes of the *classes* is this: that there is some wholesome moral discipline exercised and some ecclesiastical propriety enforced; that the ministers were afraid to attempt much without the support of their lay elders; that the laymen attended very badly; and from them the doubt spreads to the ministers, whether it is worth while to carry the thing any further. London and Lancashire went doggedly on to the eve of the Restoration; but in other places the *classis* dwindled away, or gave place in time to a better thing. And this better thing was the Voluntary Association of ministers of which Baxter and his neighbours set the pattern in the Worcestershire agreement of 1653. These associations were of ministers only, much on the model of the prophesyings. The associated ministers were at liberty to organize their own parishes as they would, but the brother of the Congregational way was told by Baxter that if he would have a gathered church, he must gather it from his own parish and not from his neighbours'. Many other counties put forth similar agreements, exhibiting, however, some differences in detail, *e.g.*, the profession of faith of Cumberland and Westmorland is highly Calvinistic, while that of Worcestershire has no Calvinism in it. Both are supposed to be only detailed paraphrases of the Apostles' Creed. In one place you have a church which has a close mutual covenant and actually re-baptises those admitted to

membership (and this not a Baptist church) ; in another you have only a promise to submit to the teaching and guidance of the minister, and on his approval the member is introduced into the church. It must be remembered that the associated ministers were a State clergy. It is certain that in spite of differences there was a brief period of harmony and good understanding. Col. John Gorges writes to Henry Cromwell in 1657, saying that the associated ministers of Somerset are joined in so firm a bond of union that 'the names of Presbyterian or Independent are not mentioned here.'

I suppose it was on practical experience of the associations, combined with his inspiring notion of the broad communion of a universal church, that Baxter based his idea of Comprehension : agreement in a few essentials, and permitted diversities of operations, which will manifest more and more the working of the same spirit as they deserve the increase which it can give, and thus lead from personal conviction to catholic communion. The Scots had been against tolerating Independents in this country at all; they retorted on the pleadings of Nye and his fellows by asking whether their plea for toleration extended to the Baptists; and according to Baillie, they could never get an answer. The simplest and most thorough-going statements as to Toleration at this time come from no ecclesiastical source, but from the 'new model army;' which, while protesting that it seeks not to overthrow Presbyterianism, demands that 'such who upon conscientious grounds may differ from the established forms may not for that be debarred from the common rights, liberties, or benefits belonging equally to all as men and members of the Commonwealth while they live soberly, honestly, and inoffensively towards others, and peacefully and truthfully towards the State.' But the Army had some reason to be annoyed with the high-handed Presbyterians of London, and, moreover, it was raising in its midst a large crop of 'gifted brethren' who were thorns in the sides of settled ministers. In the eyes of the 'grace-taught' soldier, as in those of George Fox, the incumbent of the steeple-house was but a priest and a cumberer of the ground. The clergy were frightened by awful

tales of the heresies and blasphemies of Ranters, Levellers, and Quakers, and denounced them in County Attestations. They had just the same anxiety as Luther had about the Anabaptists, and wondered if a measure of freedom must always be a disclosure of Protestant disunion. Under these circumstances the associated ministers grew closer together towards the end of the Commonwealth period. Their differences were more and more obliterated. Many of the Independent leaders had renounced the extremes of Separatism; and the Savoy Declaration of 1658 assured the Presbyterians that their Congregational brethren were not only sound in the faith, but were taking broader views of religious fellowship than their fathers had done. But by this time Cromwell was dead, and all further development was stopped by uncertainty as to the future, and divergence of political views.

Cromwell's own views of toleration had been expressed in the Instrument of Government (1653): 'that such as professed faith in God by Jesus Christ (though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, or discipline publicly held forth) shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in, the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion, provided this liberty be not extended to Popery or prelacy, nor to such as, under the profession of Christ, set forth and practise licentiousness.' Hereupon, Baxter tells us, the orthodox party said that the words 'faith in God by Jesus Christ' should mean nothing less than the fundamentals of religion; and he was appointed a member of a committee of divines to draw up a statement of fundamentals 'to be as a test in this toleration.' Then follow his often quoted words: 'I would have had the brethren to have offered the Parliament the creed, the Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue alone as our essentials or fundamentals, which, at least, contain all that is necessary to salvation, and hath been taken by all the Churches for the sum of their religion. And whereas they still said, "a Socinian or a Papist will subscribe all this," I answered them, So much the better and so much fitter it is to be the matter of our concord.' What does this mean? Not that he was indifferent to further points of doctrine, not that he cared nothing for theological refinements—he spent his life among them—but that, as

he explains, it is always better to take a man into, than to leave him out of, your religious polity. Begin by making him an outlaw, and you lose all influence over him. Make the essentials such as he can readily admit, or his acceptance of what you impose becomes a mere form which he will probably treat disingenuously. Make them uniform for all, so that there may be no distinction at the outset between him and the man who subscribes more than he, such as would make him a second-class burgher in the Kingdom of God. And there is behind this, Baxter's extraordinary faith in the right-mindedness of man. Start him with correct premisses, and he must surely arrive at correct conclusions, especially if he may have the privilege of a few minutes' conversation with Richard Baxter.

Baxter had faith in the practical union of moderate men. He tells us exactly this in speaking of the associated ministers of Worcestershire. After excepting a few Episcopalians and Independents who held aloof, he says: 'All the rest were mere Catholics, men of no faction, nor siding with any party, but owning that which was good in all as far as they could discern it, and upon a concord in so much, laying out themselves for the great ends of their ministry, the people's edification.' I doubt not that a great number of the ejected ministers were such 'disengaged faithful men,' as he calls them. I think our religious ancestry runs back to those men whom Baxter afterwards defended as the 'mere Nonconformists'—'those who had addicted themselves to no sect or party at all, though the vulgar called them by the name of Presbyterians.' 'I am loth,' he adds, 'to call them a party, because they were for Catholicism against parties. How strong in numbers the moderates were, may be gathered from Baxter's estimate that if the Restoration settlement of the Church had been on the lines of Charles II.'s October Declaration passed into law (a scheme of modified episcopacy with some relaxation of subscription), not more than three hundred ministers would have refused to conform. As it was, the restored bishops and a vindictive House of Commons were bent on making such comprehension impossible, and won a mean triumph in the Act of Uniformity. And Baxter was among the first batch of the ejected.

It was with a consistent fidelity to conviction that the men who,

like Baxter, held that the terms and conditions of Christianity itself ought to be the terms and conditions of the Church, refused still to consider that the revengeful interference of the State could make the Church of England into a false Church, and thought it right to attend the worship of parish churches, and after 1670, as a further testimony in the same direction, to communicate in the sacrament. The Vicar of Mansfield reports, 'The Presbyterians do frequent the public assembly here' (1669), and among those who did so were five ejected ministers, two of whom became ministers of the High Pavement, Nottingham. Sharpe, when Archbishop of York, recalled the days when he had administered the sacrament to Baxter, who on one occasion knelt to receive it between Sir Roger L'Estrange, who prepared the case against him which brought him to trial before Judge Jeffreys, and Miles Pranse, who was convicted of perjury in the affair of Sir Edmund Bury Godfrey—an extreme illustration truly of his own theory of open and Catholic communion. The breadth of view, the refusal to be made sectarian, which prompted the action of Baxter, Manton, Howe, and others in this matter, has seldom been understood or appreciated. It was construed to justify the sacramental test. It was used to point the jibe of the Conformist about the sin of schism—'if it is not sinful to conform in part, it must be sinful not to conform altogether.' It woke up the old Independent testimony against a false Church, and led to a good deal of controversy among the ejected, and a falling back into two camps again. It was one of the cases in which Baxter, to use his own illustration, put his bare hand into a cleft and both sides closed upon it.

When, in 1689, the Toleration Act passed, and the Revolution project of Comprehension failed, there was on the part of the moderate Nonconformist the same persistent unwillingness to take up a Separatist or Sectarian position. Some chapels had been built in the country during the brief indulgence of 1672; there was in this, to the minds of the patriarchs of 'mere Nonconformity,' a token of too ready foregoings of the Englishman's birthright in his church. And when it had to be Dissent, licensed and regulated, there was great unwillingness to hold service at the meeting-house during the

public time, *i.e.*, the time of service in the parish church. And the moderate Nonconformist went to both. Thoresby, the Leeds antiquary, enumerates his own four forms of worship: The public (Leeds Parish Church), the private (Mill Hill Chapel), the family, and the secret. When we complain sometimes that the meeting-house is like a barn, that it is hidden in a back street, and so forth, we are apt to forget how often the stones were laid with a sigh of disappointment and a hope that no second generation of religious exiles might worship on the spot; how entirely the work of the minister was conceived as lying within the particular society, what careful shrinking there was from anything like competition with the clergy as to public and parochial functions, and from any assumption that the chapel stood for a purer gospel or a profounder piety than the church!

We cannot wonder that the moderate Nonconformist espoused the idea of a Comprehensive Dissent, if he might not belong to a Comprehensive Church. The Heads of Agreement, due mostly to the pen and to the discretion of John Howe, which were approved in 1691, contained a scheme for revived association. Presbyterian and Independent were again to cease from using these distinctive names; they were alike to be Protestant Dissenters (the term used in the Toleration Act), and their associated ministers were to be United Brethren. You will consequently find that the deeds of chapels for twenty years from this date devote them to 'the worship of God by Protestant Dissenters,' sometimes followed by such a clause as 'that is to say, Presbyterians or Independents'—a fruitful source of trouble. The Presbyterians were under the impression that in these Heads of Agreement they had conceded a great deal to the Congregationals; but many of the Congregationals had the feeling that, having toleration, they chiefly wanted to apply their own scheme, and were disinclined to any forfeiture of a point of Independency in the interests of an association they did not particularly care about. Within a year, the United Brethren of London were called upon to intervene in a case which revealed a difference of feeling such as no paper concordat could bridge over. An Independent minister in Cambridgeshire held what we should call revival services, which were followed by

hysterical phenomena, then unfamiliar. With the aid of laymen who were 'awakening preachers,' he carried on missions; he gathered from other churches, and re-baptised those who had received the baptism of the Church of England. So sure was he that that church was false, or none at all, that any member of his flock who attended a service therein, was visited with censure, and, if impenitent, with excommunication. Nothing could be more abhorrent than this, from the feeling of the Baxterian; and we are prepared to find that in the subsequent age of the great Evangelical Revival, the Presbyterian and the Independent are on different sides.

The case of the church I have mentioned, leads me to say a word about Covenants. This Church, of Rothwell or Rowell, was gathered under the Commonwealth, and its original covenant bound the members to walk according to a large body of Articles selected by their minister from a book by Francis Junius, Professor at Leiden, and to profess them against all error. I mention this merely to show that the Happy Union was somewhat hampered by the fact, that nobody could tell beforehand what the terms of membership of an Independent Church might be. Dr. Doddridge is said to have refused to consider an invitation to an important church in London, because he apprehended that its covenant was such as he could not take. Still, it is marvellous how much practical fusion there was in the country, especially as compared with London; due (1) to county associations, which took the Heads of Agreement as their charter; (2) to the recognition therein of 'consent and agreement to walk together according to a gospel rule,' as a usual condition of membership, with the proviso that different degrees of explicitness in such agreement ought not to prevent churches from owning each other as *instituted* churches (notice, there is a careful avoidance of all the old fighting terms throughout); (3) to the fact, that some Presbyterian churches adopted such forms of covenant as justified their Congregational neighbours in owning them and 'sitting down with them' (as Oliver Heywood says) under this clause; such covenants, in so far as I know them, appear to be very much on the lines of that prescribed in the Worcestershire agreement. But it certainly looks as if the Presbyterian people were more or less Congregationalized, as the price of ministerial association.

Such were the internal relations of those Associated Nonconformists whose harmony was seriously endangered, first, by the Antinomian controversy, and then by the Exeter and Salters' Hall controversies, in which an aggressive section of the Independents strove to fix upon the Presbyterians the discredit of incomplete orthodoxy—in the one case, of a waning Calvinism, and in the other, of laxity or indifference as to the doctrine of the Trinity. It is to be remembered that all permitted Dissent was subject to the conditions of the Toleration Act, and that subscription to the doctrinal articles of the Church of England was obligatory on every minister who took out a licence. The Church of England had been convulsed by a Trinitarian controversy, but there was no outbreak of heresy, not even of suspicion, among Dissenters, on this matter, save at Exeter, where the fusion of Presbyterian and Independent in a common cause had seemed most complete. We must not attach too much importance to the victory, if such it can be called, of the Non-subscribers at Salters' Hall in 1719—as though they had 'come out' on some great principle of theological progressiveness. (Yet it was so understood, *e.g.*, by Dr. Kippis, in a later generation.) Rather was it that they resented what they took to be an effort to get a particular 'degree of explicitness' imposed as a test of fellowship, on a matter of doctrine which had been, within the last few years, treated in a variety of ways, all equally claiming to be Trinitarian and orthodox. And this same temper marks the whole treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in Presbyterian circles for the next fifty years (1720-1770). There is no fresh start: no working out of theology from a new central conception, of the uni-personality of God, or the simple humanity of Christ. But there is a continuous resistance of all attempts to make the doctrine of the Trinity more central, more essential, more definite, and more detailed, than it is in Scripture. The Arian and the Socinian 'scheme' alike professed to be a 'Scripture doctrine of the Trinity': both of these admitted prayer to, or invocation of, Christ: and as the usage of free prayer left the mode and measure of this to the minister, there was none of that

sharp revulsion with which Lindsey turned against the worship of a being not absolutely God—what he branded as ‘Christian Idolatry.’ Lindsey made *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, the motto of his new departure. Perhaps the spirits of some of our ancestors may have reason to complain that we have, during the past century, too exclusively followed his leading—have limited our sympathy, if not our communion, by too precise a doctrine of the ultimate Godhead, and raised it to a ‘degree of explicitness’ which oversteps at once our actual knowledge and our professed liberality.

The REV. WALTER LLOYD, Gloucester, opened the discussion. He said :

Mr. Odgers has explained how it is that we are inhabiting the chapels which at the beginning of the eighteenth century were occupied by our orthodox and perhaps Calvinistic predecessors. That is the point which is generally of most interest to us. A great deal Mr. Odgers has told us is common to the history of all Nonconformists ; the question of interest is how we have branched off, or how other Dissenters, as I believe, have branched off, from the proper and natural development of Protestant dissent. One thing arises out of the paper which we have just heard, and that is that neither the Roman Catholic hierarchy, nor the Anglican prelacy, nor the Presbyterian system which was set up, not in the Commonwealth but in the Long Parliament,—contributed in any way to the development of civil or religious or intellectual liberty in England ; that came from an altogether different source. We are told by Hobbes ‘That as Elizabeth had overthrown the Catholic hierarchy, so the Presbyterians had overthrown the Episcopacy, to be, in their turn overthrown by the Independents.’ The Presbyterians attempted to overthrow the Independents at the Restoration, but ruined themselves for good. At the Revolution Independency revived, but Presbyterianism, as properly defined, knew no resurrection. But neither the church of the Restoration, nor the Toleration Act, permitted any freedom of thought. I am sorry to have to say it, but I think it is almost a general truth that neither civil nor intellectual nor religious liberty has ever originated with, if it has been permitted or assisted by, ecclesiastics or theologians. They have benefited by it ; but the origin has been outside them. With regard to one or two points in history which want clearing up. We come to the time of the Toleration Act—I must pass over the earlier period—and see what happened in 1691. The Presbyterians went over to the Independents, and, to

save appearances, called it a union. It was on the 6th April, 1691, that John Howe wrote to the Cheshire ministers 'The brethren that were consulted formerly of both persuasions, Presbyterian and Congregational, (though now there is no such distinction with us) were most unanimous, and 'twas left to be communicated to you by your affectionate brother and fellow-servant John Howe.' There was no such distinction adopted by dissenting congregations in 1691. Any definition of Independency will cover those we call Presbyterians; but no definition of Presbyterianism will embrace them at all. The late venerable minister of Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Dr. Sadler, about twelve years ago was called as a witness in a celebrated law case, known as the Tooting Chapel Case, and having to produce some documents, was cross-examined as follows by Mr. Gainsford Bruce.—

'Q. What body do you belong to? A. It has no name except Rosslyn Hill Chapel; outside it would be called Unitarian, and by the congregation itself in many respects; but the trust deed is what is called an open trust "for the worship of God." Q. Your congregation belongs to some religious body? A. Not at all. Q. You call your congregation a Presbyterian congregation? A. We call it Rosslyn Hill. The trust deed is borrowed from the favourite Presbyterian trust, "in trust for the worship of God." We descended from Presbyterians, and have the same type of polity. Q. Because your predecessors were Presbyterians you call yourselves so? A. They were not more Presbyterian than we are.' Those were the Presbyterians of the early part of the eighteenth century; on the admission of Dr. Sadler 'they were not more Presbyterian than we are.' So I always content myself with using the term furnished by the Toleration Act—namely Protestant Dissenters. But in church government they were all Independents; and the strongest Independents of all I suppose were the Baptists. The question is how was it that some of these Dissenters became Liberals and the majority remained orthodox? There is no mystery about it; it is the history of every movement. The majority are always orthodox, and there are always a few Liberals moving forward. Then we are misled by not taking sufficiently into account the reaction there was, as Walter Wilson says, when in the latter part of the eighteenth century, all the orthodox Dissenters went over to the Methodists, and some few of the old congregations who kept up the old spirit were called Presbyterians. But they had all adopted the Independent form of government. What would happen if you brought in the Presbyterian system or offered it to any of our congregations—suggest that some Presbytery or committee should rule over them! Ask them whether they are Independents or Presbyterians! We are all Independents. The modern Congregationalists are not the successors of the Independents. They have given up nearly every principle of Independency, and they have said and done things within

the last year or two that are enough to make the old Independents turn in their graves. There are some letters appearing in the *Christian World* on Doctrinal Trusts. These trusts came in to keep Unitarianism from spreading in the orthodox congregations. Discussion has been provoked, I think, partly owing to this Conference. A lawyer—not a parson—wrote a letter the week before last, and he took up an idea I had suggested in another case. He proposes that in the new trusts they shall take power to modify from time to time—say once every fifty years—the doctrinal clauses; and then, of all things in the world for an Independent to say, he suggests that before altering the doctrinal clauses they should get the consent of the Committee of the Congregational Union. Where is their Independency gone? I had a visit from an official congregationalist about a fortnight ago—a well-known gentleman in the West of England. Talking to him I said, ‘I consider myself as good an Independent now as I ever was.’ ‘Certainly,’ he said; ‘I look upon you (meaning the churches represented at this Conference) as the real Independents.’ I should like to say a few words on the real point of the discussion; and that is our religious liberty and our intellectual liberty—where did they come from, and how have they progressed? This is the thing of most importance. Ecclesiasticism never contributed to them. The other Dissenters had every opportunity of remaining as free as we are—the same trusts, the same system—and yet they went over to the Methodists, and tied themselves up in a knot; while we have remained free. I was struck with what happened in this Hall this morning. We began the service by singing a hymn written by John Milton; we ended by hearing an appreciation of James Martineau. Milton, Martineau! You cannot dissociate them. If you want to find the root of our love of intellectual and religious liberty you find it in the greatest Englishman that ever lived, the great Independent, John Milton. In 1838 Dr. Martineau—I connect the names of Milton and Martineau because we have had them here this morning—made a most important speech at a meeting of Unitarians in London, in which he advocated the right of free enquiry—one of his leading principles all through his life. In the course of that speech he said: ‘Why drop our anchor here, in seas from which we must be driven, instead of looking out for bright lands ahead and seeking still a better country, even a heavenly?’ And John Milton had written in the *Areopagitica*, the most splendid defence of intellectual and religious liberty ever penned—‘But he who thinks we are to pitch our tent here, and have attained the utmost prospect of reformation, that the mortal glass, wherein we contemplate, can show us, till we come to the beatific vision, that man by this very opinion declares, that he is yet far short of truth.’ All down the line these are the sentiments and these are

the principles that have been held—I don't say by Independents or Presbyterians or Churchmen, but by all Englishmen who have loved civil, religious, intellectual and spiritual liberty. There is another point, namely, that theological expansion has followed intellectual enlargement and liberty. In the present age liberal theology has been the effect of the general broadening of thought, and has been largely due to the influence of scientific discovery and philosophy. And so it was in the seventeenth century. John Milton, himself a man of the highest attainments in every intellectual sphere, was associated with all the most learned and thoughtful men of Europe, and was in every way in harmony with that great intellectual movement which we call the Renaissance. And as it is now, so it was then; liberal Dissent has always been influenced by philosophy and science, by the research of men like Milton, Newton, Locke, Hartley, Priestley, and others of that stamp. As early as 1749 David Hartley wrote, referring to creeds and their use in early days: 'But now they grow old, and seem ready to die away and to give place to the worship of God in spirit and in truth, in which there is neither Papist, Protestant, Calvinist, Trinitarian, Unitarian, Mystic or Methodist; but all these distinctions are carried away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. We are all Christians. We received this denomination in Apostolic times, and ought to seek no other.' And that was seven or eight years before Dr. John Taylor introduced a similar passage in his famous Norwich sermon. There is nothing in Luther, or Calvin, or Baxter, equal to the spirit of Milton; and I will end with a quotation from Dr. Watts, another Independent, written in his younger days:—

'I cannot make this iron knee
Bend to a meaner power than that which form'd it free.'

MR. S. S. MILLIN, B.A., B.L., Belfast, said:

I shall confine myself to one phase of the question, illustrating it from the history of a church in Ireland that was founded the same year as the one in which we met yesterday in Leicester. The church of the Second Congregation of Protestants and Dissenters in Belfast, was founded in the year 1708, and the history of that congregation brings us down from the beginning of non-subscription in Ireland. To-day we have heard the history of the development of religious liberty on this side of the channel, and I would like to inform this assembly that we have an equally interesting history of Unitarianism on the other side of the channel. When the Second Congregation of Belfast was founded in the year 1708, it was absolutely necessary to sign the assent to the thirty-nine Articles. At the same time it was penal to deny or even to doubt the Divinity of Christ.

Notwithstanding these laws that were enforced against the Protestants and Dissenters, the Second Congregation took a noble stand in the cause of liberty, and its minister was the champion of non-subscription in Ireland—I refer to Dr. Kilpatrick. He was the minister of that congregation for a period of some thirty-five years, and the one word which seemed to be the guiding star of that old man was the word liberty. Dr. Kilpatrick died while he was in the act of writing his ‘Defence of Christian Liberty.’ No subsequent minister of the Second Congregation of Belfast has ever departed from that principle of ‘liberty.’

The REV. E. FRIPP, Belfast, said :

The subject before us is more or less academic, and therefore to be left in a large degree to the experts. I will not, however, dismiss the alleged Baxterian Catholicity as a myth. The best of Baxter’s followers laid stress, as he had done, on the uniting sentiments of Christian love and worship, rather than theological opinions. They recognised that doctrine was not identical with religion, and was not to be put on a level with it. I am not so impressed as some of my fellow Free Churchmen are by the Catholicity of Unitarians. Mr. Lloyd and his friends have much to say on the illiberalism of some of our Presbyterian ancestors. They may be right; they probably are. But whatever their faults, our forefathers were not guilty of some of the illiberalism which has appeared among us since Unitarianism dominated our churches. I am one of those who are no longer satisfied with Unitarianism, who are getting decidedly and desperately weary of the Unitarian controversy, and who believe there are truths infinitely more urgent and of more vital concern to men than that of the unipersonality of the Godhead. It is a matter of history that our congregations were never so small, so indifferent, so irregular at public worship as since they took Unitarianism for their banner in place of the old principle of non-subscription, made the advocacy of doctrinal truth the chief reason of their being, instead of the old insistence on love and holiness and righteousness and prayer, and whatsoever binds man to man in this work of the Kingdom of God. I venture to believe that our church life will never again be eager, vivid, enthusiastic, imaginative, until we recognise as our great foe, not theological error, but ‘the world, the flesh, and the Devil.’ There are many liberal features no doubt in what is called ‘undogmatic Unitarianism,’ but it is not liberal enough for some of us. We prefer the old watchword as the basis of our fellowship, ‘The worship and service of God,’ without insistence on particular doctrinal conclusions.

REV. J. E. ODGERS, M.A. :—Just a word in closing the discussion, Mr. Chairman. There are existing, we hope, among the records of our congregations, documents which will give us the connecting link of Non-

conformist history which we all want. Some of the most important historical documents have disappeared within the last thirty years, to my knowledge. Let us try and get into print documentary evidence while it is available. I should like you, where you know that there are people interested in our Nonconformist history, to communicate, say with me. Let us form a little society which shall issue from time to time papers and documents that are of value. For instance, there is that old question as to the existence of covenants. We want to know the truth, so let us have a society which will print documents as the opportunities to do so arise.

THE AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Conference reassembled after lunch, at the Temperance Hall, under the presidency of MR. H. P. GREG, M.A. (Handforth), who said :

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I think the Conference Committee has acted wisely in placing these two subjects together for discussion this afternoon, for they are very closely connected indeed. Surely if the religious life of our young people were organized to the best advantage, we should have no anxiety as regards the future supply of our ministers. But there are great difficulties in the way, for in any system of organization education must play a large part; and not very many parents know how to educate their children, and few know how to direct the impulses of their children towards Religion and Liberty. Their idea of religious education is to read Bible stories to their little ones; and very beautiful are those stories, just of a character to interest and fascinate the little minds. The stories of Abraham offering up Isaac, of Jonah and the whale, of Samson, of Daniel in the lions' den, have that touch of mysticism or fairyland that appeals to children with such force. But if we are to maintain our position, we must do much more than read stories. We must read and then educate,—and here our future ministers having received special training can be so useful; and then educate, draw out the child's intelligence, see that the reasoning faculty is not cramped by tradition, make sure that the elements of religion are engrafted in the child heart as firmly as the alphabet is engrafted in the child mind; see that the little one is not troubled,

as so many have been, with thoughts of a vengeful God, of an unjust God who punishes one man for the sin of another, just as we see that the little one is not taught exploded notions about the Immobility of the Earth. When we see our son receiving the best education which we can give him in the elements of Mathematics and Science, why do we leave to chance his knowledge of the elements of Religion and Liberty? I know the answer. We say in our hearts, 'I had no such instruction, and see how imbued I am with Religion and Liberty. My son will be the same.' As though the beauty of Religion and the sacred fire of Liberty were some ingredients of the blood, or heirlooms that could be handed down with the family jewels. No! That will not suffice to-day. We are in the midst of rapid change, we are going through a crisis, a second Reformation, not to depose a pope and substitute a king, but to suppress clerical domination and to assert personal responsibility. We must realise this fact. Our fathers fought one battle for Religion and Liberty, our sons must fight a different, perhaps a more difficult, battle, but under the same banner. Our fathers fought for a freedom which really meant little more than equality with other religious bodies. Until that equality was gained they laboured under a feeling of persecution, and they possessed the strength and unity which that feeling generates. They fought a great fight, and they won. All honour be to them. But our sons? We want not a new religion, nor a new application of religion, but the application of religion to new circumstances. What are those new circumstances? For what are our sons to fight? Surely their fight is for freedom from the materialistic spirit, which to-day is so dominant; for freedom from the military spirit which is more eager to gird on the sword than to listen to reason; for freedom from the monetary spirit which engenders indifference to all the higher aspirations of mankind. If that is the battle before us, it is fit we should see to the organization of the religious life of our young people, and to the supply of capable ministers. I feel that owing to our freedom we have a special responsibility to our race to our age. We act as

the advance guard of a great army, or rather the scouts of that advance guard, whose duty it is to explore and examine the country along which the great army of mankind is to advance to the kingdom of God upon earth. The ground which we explore to-day will be occupied fifty years hence by the main body, and by the rearguard perhaps a century later. If we neglect through laziness or inattention our duty as scouts, the whole army is delayed; if we refuse through weakness or fear to act, the whole army is disorganized, until slowly but surely other scouts are found more faithful and more fearless, and we are left to be picked up by the main body or the rearguard. And this special responsibility carries with it a special obligation; we must fix our eyes on the object to be gained, the kingdom of God on earth, and we must not let our attention be diverted by any false trail or specious compromise. Those who have truly learnt to value religion and liberty cannot one jot or tittle compromise those principles of life; they at all costs must be true to them, and leave compromise to others who but dimly comprehend the beauty of religion and the sacred fire of liberty. But you may say it is all pride and vainglory which leads me to assign to members of the Non-subscribing Churches the posts of scouts to this great army. Such pride and vainglory are dangers which our future supply of ministers must help us to avoid, they are enemies against which our sons must fight. What is the object? The kingdom of God upon earth. How can it be achieved? By walking humbly with God and doing His will. If pride and vainglory actuate us, we *ipso facto* forfeit our post, and others will replace us; but in the meantime the advance of the main body will be delayed, not stopped. Thus, look at it which way you will, a great responsibility rests on us, especially on parents, who must see that their children are educated to the best of their power, not only in mathematics and literature, but in religion and liberty; and on ministers who devote their lives to the service of God and man, and who receive a special training to enable them to educate and elevate others. The ministry, therefore, must not be surprised nor discouraged that

the laity regard with anxiety the future supply of, the recruiting for, the ministry. Rather should they rejoice and take hope from that deep-seated anxiety. Any discussion which enables the ministry and laity to see more clearly the point of view of the other in this matter should be welcomed by both, provided recrimination is sedulously suppressed. And I can only express my fervent hope that this discussion may pave the way to a practical result of the appeal, with which the Committee of Manchester College closed their last report, to the ministers and parents of the Non-subscribing Churches, asking for renewed exertion, upon the young placed in their charge, of that strong and deep religious influence, the outcome of which should surely be not only the devotion of many young lives to the ministry of the religion in which they have been nurtured in home and church, but also the dedication of many others to the higher life of sobriety, earnestness, intelligence and piety, lifted above the floods of worldly engagements and temptations into the devotion of heart and soul and mind, to the service of the living God.

The REV. JOHN ELLIS (Sheffield) then read his paper as follows :—

HOW BEST TO ORGANIZE THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

I am not sure that this Title quite accurately describes my present purpose. What I have chiefly in view is, to call attention to the need for some organization which shall bind our Young People more closely together for Religious Fellowship and Helpful Service, and hold them in faithful allegiance to our Churches. The 'how best to organize,' if the need be admitted, must of necessity be left to the determination of a Committee, consisting of those whose abilities, sympathies, and experience especially qualify them for so important a duty.

There are abundant signs, in many directions, of the growing recognition of the fact that our Churches are not doing all that it is possible for them to do to foster the religious life of the

young, or to make the Church a congenial religious home for them; or to send them out into the world enthusiastic workers for God, for Truth, for Righteousness. Very significant in this connection was a resolution passed by the Teachers in Council at the Oxford Summer meeting, which ran as follows: 'That we, the members here assembled, feel the immense importance of the young people of our congregations and schools being invited to become members of the churches in a definite way. That when we return to our various centres we will ask our ministers and members of our congregations to take steps without delay, and make arrangements for such invitation to our young people into the Church; that our Church should recognise its responsibility for these young people, and that its members should use every means in their power to make of it a religious home and a field of useful labour for our young people.'

Probably some of you were delegates at the Oxford Meeting, and have already brought the important matters mentioned in this resolution before your respective Churches. I hope you have, and to some purpose. But, from the nature of the case, it cannot have received that full discussion in the Churches as a whole, which it well deserves. We could not have a more frank acknowledgment of the consciousness that much remains to be done for the religious culture of the young, after the devoted band of Teachers have done their best.

These 'Teachers in Council' say to the Churches, in effect, if not in words: 'We have done what we could by personal influence, earnest thought, and anxious care, to instil into the minds and hearts of these little ones the principles of religion and the precepts of the gospels, and to deepen the springs of character and inspire their lives with high aims; now do you, fellow-members of the Church, who often from your positions of leisured ease patronise and pity us, take these young people, precious lives we have tried to mould, and receive them into a religious home congenial to them—into the body of the living Church.' Can you resist such an earnest appeal?

Note the significant change that is coming over the minds of our school workers. They seem at last to have been touched with the spirit that is abroad in the churches of other denominations

Hitherto the discussions at our Sunday-school Conferences have turned on the question, how to retain our scholars in the Sunday-school; and the remedy for the failure suggested has generally been to provide more varied opportunities for social intercourse. We have provided all sorts of amusements and recreative agencies, and still have done little to stop the leakage.

Now, whilst allowing amusements their proper place in a healthy life, we are coming more and more to see the importance of subordinating these to the main objects of the Church and the Sunday-school, and to recognise that the work of the Sunday-school must be completed in the Church. And the problem now is, how, at the earliest moment, to transfer the Young People to the Church, and enlist their energy and enthusiasm with the agency of the Church, for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

We are bound to acknowledge, sooner or later, that there comes a time—even in our Lancashire and Yorkshire and Welsh Sunday Schools—when the youths and maidens, the young men and women, discard the condition of pupilage; when the methods of the School lose their attractiveness for them; when they have an ardent desire to live their own life. It is at this period, when young people are most susceptible to impressions, that we find such a tremendous leakage. The School has ceased to attract them. They have not yet realised the value of worship. The staid respectable formality of the Church Service fails to win them. Often they get a cool reception by the older members of the religious community to which they belong. They are thought to be too inexperienced to take an active part with their seniors, in spreading the light of truth and the glow of a good life. And so they lapse. They either connect themselves with other religious bodies, where they feel the fervour of devotion, or go to swell the ranks of the mediocre and commonplace. They go out, for the most part, into the world, not even undergraduates in the school of religion—the better for their school days no doubt—respectable members of society—but without the enthusiasm of religion.

If I have described the situation fairly, you will be ready to admit that there is greatly wanted some organization to meet the

needs of the Young People in this transition period—something which shall not be exactly school and not exactly church—possibly a combination of both—through which an earnest endeavour shall be made to deepen the religious consciousness; to cultivate the feeling of reverence; to provide an avenue for generous and unselfish activities—a bridge connecting School and Church, over which the young can pass with natural ease and safety.

Perhaps, if I relate my own experience as I faced these considerations it will be helpful in the discussion. With the inspiration of the last Conference strong within me, I fell to thinking how I could best direct my energies to increase the vitality of my Church. We were well organized in many respects. In addition to the regular services and Sunday-school Sessions, we had an Adult Class, Literary and Social Union, Band of Hope, Sick and Provident Society, Mothers' Meeting, Ladies' Sewing Society, Dramatic Society, Holiday Fund, and Recreation Clubs. But there was lacking with all this that strong attachment on the part of the young to the Church in its main purpose.

After anxious pondering over the matter, I resolved to invite a few of the young men to my house, to confer with them on the subject. Ten of us met. These young fellows did not know what I had in mind. We talked freely about the religious consciousness, the efficacy of prayer, the Unitarian's idea of God, the aims and objects of the Church. Two of the ten had come over to us from the Methodist body; one, who had been a Wesleyan, was disposed to reverent Agnosticism; another was an ardent Socialist; the rest had passed through all the classes of our Sunday-school. I wanted to know how we could help each other to a more vital religion. Those who had been reared in Wesleyanism confessed to the feeling of a lack of close fellowship in the religious life. They missed the self-expression and mutual encouragement which they had before experienced; and those who had been constant companions in our own Sunday-school, much to my surprise, expressed the same view. One and all said how good it was to have had such a frank and friendly talk about these deep things, as we had that evening. They hoped we should meet together again in such a way, for they felt

that barriers had been broken down, and that they had come nearer to each other than ever they had done before. They agreed to form themselves into a Society for Religious Fellowship and the Cultivation of the Higher Life.

It was at this point that I came into connection with the Young People's Religious Union of America. I had read of the Lend-a-Hand Clubs, the Ten-Times-One Clubs, the Look-up Legions, which had come into being through Dr. Hale's influence; and I knew from the *Christian Register* that the Young People's Religious Union was a federation of these. I wrote for information. The Secretary sent me a copy of their Liturgical Services, and a List of Topics arranged for the year. This was just what we needed. We decided to organize on the lines of the Young People's Religious Union, and to hold weekly meetings, for which members themselves should be responsible. When all was ready, I announced from the pulpit that on a certain evening we should meet to inaugurate our Society, and cordially invited all above fifteen years of age who desired to unite for religious fellowship and the cultivation of the higher life to attend. We started with twenty-five members. I emphasized the importance of considering this their own meeting, to be conducted by themselves. Of course, I should attend as often as I could, to add my word, but only as one of them. The meetings must be of a distinctly religious character. The Topics chosen must have some bearing upon religious truth, or the formation of character, or social service, and be conducted, not in the manner of the debating society, but with a view to deepening the religious consciousness, or stimulating each other to high and noble purposes. You see it was to no flowery path of fleeting pleasure and social enjoyment to which I called them. The bond was to be the God-consciousness and the desire to be of service to others. Lest you should conclude that such an institution is calculated to turn out religious prigs, let me assure you that these young folks, on other evenings, enjoy the papers and discussions at our Literary and Social Union, occasional dances and concerts, and out-door sports, quite as intensely as anyone else. But they have kept this one evening for religious exercises and mutual edification, and the encouragement of each other to good endeavour,

as sacredly as we keep the services of the Church for a similar purpose. We have met every Thursday evening, with very few exceptions, winter and summer, for now two and a half years. A different member at each meeting undertakes to announce the hymns, lead in a responsive liturgy, occasionally to provide quotations bearing upon the topic under consideration for the younger members to read, direct the conversation, read the prayers, and sometimes offer extempore prayer. Other members in turn undertake to speak or read a paper on a pre-arranged topic, and all are expected to take some part in the proceedings. 'In the love of truth, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man, and as his followers we accept the religion of Jesus, which is summed up in love to God and love to man.' The Topics chosen are in accordance with our high aims; and often-times the way in which the young men and women, boys and girls, deal with these, which sometimes would seem to be quite away from their habitual thinking, has been to me a revelation of the latent power for good in our young folks, which we too commonly allow to remain undeveloped and unused. We meet for the study of truth, for the cultivation of worship, for encouragement in service. The two first objects have succeeded beyond measure in increasing devotion and attachment to the highest things. The natural fruitage of our efforts in this direction was to be able to present about twenty members, at a service of self-consecration at the beginning of the year, who were welcomed into the fellowship of the church, and who promised heartily to undertake the responsibilities and duties attaching to church membership. Without our Y.P.R.U., it is extremely doubtful whether such a result could have been achieved. To carry out the object of encouraging each other in helpful service, we have several committees. A Look-out Committee, the members of which are expected to introduce new members, and look-up absentees. A Flower Committee, to provide flowers for the table, and after the meetings to take them to the homes of the sick, whenever we know of any; a Missionary Committee, to distribute the Church Calendar and Unitarian literature in their respective neighbourhoods. We find Union members active in service as teachers, at Band of Hope meetings, in the choir, and in ways of usefulness in all our institu-

tions. We have now under consideration plans for brightening and helping the lives of the poor and neglected.

Such is a brief sketch of the origin and work of our own organization for the Young People. I cannot stop to describe at length how it has helped to deepen the religious life of its members, and to make religion a far more living and real thing to them ; nor how it has given them a valuable training in conducting religious meetings and expressing their religious thoughts before others ; nor how it has deepened their interest in the Church, and helped to bring them into the Church as active co-workers ; nor how it has given them an increased appreciation of our own Unitarian Faith, not only on its side of reasonableness and truth, but also on its side of spiritual quickening and practical value in life. But I can confidently say it has done all this abundantly.

Now, when one is asked to say, ' How best to organize the religious life of our young people,' one is naturally disposed to advocate what one has oneself found to be successful. In other Churches with other needs different methods from those of the organization known as the Y.P.R.U. may be necessary. But the Y.P.R.U. idea has this to recommend it, that it is organized on the lines of the Christian Endeavour Society, which is such a phenomenal success in other Nonconformist Churches throughout the world. When you have made allowances for all the cant and hypocrisy and morbid self-introspection often laid to the charge of these societies, you must admit that it means a vast uplift to humanity to have the moral and religious energy of over 3,000,000 young folks directed to good endeavour. From this great movement, as from other great movements, we must perforce stand apart. But there is no reason why we should not adopt what is good in their methods, and adapt them to serve our own needs.

The organization of the Y.P.R.U., with its weekly meetings, its religious tone, its set purpose to stimulate the young to live a good life, and to indicate ways to activity in human uplifting, appeal strongly to those whom we wish to influence.

Whether we adopt this scheme or not, I hope this Conference will not close before placing on record its recommendation to the

Churches to seriously consider some plan which will bring our young people, throughout the country, into closer touch with each other. I think we are about ready for this movement. Anyhow, I venture to predict that the World's Convention of Christian Endeavourers, shortly to be held in London, will arouse us to the discernment of our shortcomings in this matter. What leads me to think we are about ready for this movement? Why, the sympathetic response to a circular issued to our ministers a short time ago, asking what was especially being done to bind the young people in religious fellowship in their respective localities. Already I find in many of our churches up and down the country flourishing societies with a common aim and purpose. There are Church and School Guilds, Guilds of Kindness, of Charity, of Temperance, of the Good Samaritan, of the Good Shepherd the titles of which sufficiently indicate their object—with manuals setting forth their objects in clearly defined terms, hymns, orders of service, prayers, and helps for every day. There are Helper's Unions, Christian Endeavour Societies, Christian Church Societies, Young People's Religious Unions, all on lines similar to the society in connection with my own church. There are Week-night Bible Classes, Week-night Services, and Minister's Preparation Classes, and, perhaps, in the majority of our churches there are Sunday Afternoon Adult Classes. The last returns of the Sunday School Association show that there are 8,321 scholars connected with our schools over sixteen years of age—not to speak of the sons and daughters of the wealthier members of our churches and the large army of teachers and other workers not reckoned in these figures. Do not these facts indicate the direction of a most promising forward movement? Let me quote the objects of three or four of these Guilds, as stated in their manuals, to show you that they are animated with a common purpose. The objects of one of these Guilds are :—'To strengthen the religious principles of its members; to stimulate their endeavours to lead good and useful lives; to bind them together in the bond of Christian fellowship; to attach them to and induce them to work for the success and prosperity of their own church and schools.' Another declares its object to be :—'To unite in friendly and helpful fellowship the

young people of the congregation, the teachers and scholars of the Sunday-school, and any other persons connected with our chapel who may wish to join, and to encourage noble living by kindly services one for another, for the chapel, the Sunday-school, and all whom it may be within our power to serve.' Another states its object thus :—'To promote in all its members holiness of life and work for God.' And on the front page of the beautiful and helpful Leicester Great Meeting Guild Manual the objects are set forth in terms which exactly indicate the kind of organization I desire to promote in all our churches. 'The Great Meeting Guild of Fellowship exists for the purpose of uniting more closely members of the congregation and Sunday School in the deeper things of life.

'We are not enough inclined to speak with each other of the most important part of life. In this Guild it is hoped that the members will try to help each other by expressing something of their deeper thoughts and feelings. By monthly meetings at which papers will be read and discussed dealing with our ideals, our duties, and our faith, opportunities for such religious expression will be afforded to all members.

'The Guild is further intended to be a religious centre for the various activities connected with the Sunday School. We have many societies and clubs, each with its own work and aims. The Guild will try to unite all such societies together on a religious basis.

'Lastly, the Guild will be a body to which the Minister and Missionary will look for help in emergencies, as well as in the mere ordinary ways of usefulness. The ideal of each member will be to give any help possible to our Church and Schools, and to strengthen one another for good.'

I have taken up four of these Manuals as they came first to hand. There is sufficient to show in these that their aims are kindred, and that it would be good for members of such societies to be more closely associated; that it would be an advantage to be connected with a representative body of kindred workers, to which each society could report, and from which it might expect encouragement and help. Such a body of men and women in hearty sympathy with the young people's movement would be ready, through

its officers, to convey information where it would be of use; to stimulate activity where there was need for it; and to forward the cause in a variety of ways. It might compile a suitable Hymnal and Liturgy, select a list of suggestive topics, and publish topic helps in our denominational papers. All this, and more, the Young People's Religious Union of America undertakes vigorously.

It seems to me we are in an exactly similar position to that in which our American brethren found themselves a few years ago. There, as here, the Churches had made successful attempts to draw their young people together in guilds and clubs in many places. The Guild workers felt how much they could help each other and forward the work, if they could devise a scheme which should draw them together. They therefore discussed a plan of union at the National Conference of our Unitarian Churches held at Washington five years ago. The outcome of that discussion was the birth of the Young People's Religious Union the following May, with the welcome of the National Conference and the American Unitarian Association. The objects of the Union were then declared to be, and continue to be—1. To foster the religious life. 2. To bring the young life of our various churches into closer association with one another. 3. To spread rational views of religion, and to put into practice such principles of life and duty as tend to uplift mankind. In the October number of *Word and Work* last year the Secretary is able to write:—‘We have to-day 110 branches with a membership of between three and four thousand. These branches are naturally, most of them, in New England, though all sections of our country are represented, and there are two societies in England. Three years have proved the value of this work, for the young people, to the young people, by the young people. Dispirited Churches have been revived, services continued for long seasons in pastorless churches, loyalty to the local church and to the denomination strengthened, and the young people trained in all ways for Christian citizenship. Local unions are left perfectly free, and hold services monthly, semi-monthly, or weekly, with local or outside speakers, their own or the national topics.

‘Four years old ! That is not a great age for an individual, nor is it a long time for a society to have existed. Still we have not done altogether badly in our short life. We came to Washington four years ago, “nothing but an abstract idea,” as Lamb would say. We come to Washington this fall an organized working body, with over 100 unions as our members. We come to hold a meeting of our own, amid the “councils of the elders,” to discuss our own relations as young people to the greater body of the Church. We come this time glad in the feeling that we, too, are a part of the Unitarian Church, with our own peculiar work to do, and already deemed worthy to bear our bit of the burden.’

We followed the example of our American friends in organizing this National Conference 18 years ago, and great benefit has resulted to the Churches. Can we not follow them with confidence in this work of organizing the young ?

It is a Union with a similar constitution to that of the Young People’s Religious Union of America that I advocate to-day. If it lies within the power of the Conference Committee to formulate and promote a scheme of union, I would urge it to do so. If not, it could at least pass resolutions to this effect :—‘That the National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other non-subscribing and kindred congregations, recognising the great need of religious training for our young people, and the great good already accomplished in some of our churches, by guilds and other organizations for that purpose, urges upon all of our Churches the desirability of trying to start some form of Young People’s Religious Societies.’

‘That the following persons, who are known to have promoted with success organizations on a religious basis for the young people in their respective localities, be appointed a committee to consider, and, if possible, to draft a scheme of union of Young People’s Societies.’

‘That this committee be instructed, when a constitution has been drafted, to address a circular (embodying the draft constitution) to every minister and superintendent of our Sunday-schools, recommending the formation of religious societies suited to the needs of their young people.’

‘That a meeting, representative of all existing Young People’s Religious Societies, be held at Essex Hall in May, 1901, for the purpose of adopting or otherwise the constitution recommended.’

I should anticipate great good from such an organized effort as is indicated in these resolutions. I believe a large proportion of the young people of our Churches and Sunday-schools would respond to a friendly and sympathetic appeal to consecrate themselves to pure and holy endeavours. We have never yet tested their loyalty. In church life as in national life there are qualities only needing the occasion to call them forward. The heart of our nation has been recently stirred by the magnificent spectacle of the response to the calling out of the reserves and volunteers to engage in the cruel and deplorable war now being waged. The call came to put their lives in jeopardy for their country. It reached the workman at his bench, the clerk at his desk, the farmer in his rural home. And they answered the call, and the workman laid aside his tools, the clerk his pen, the peasant his implement, and, one by one, through country lane and city street, after pathetic farewells to those dear ones whom they might never again see on earth, joined the throng of those going to the war, cheered on by the voice of the multitude. Hate war and the causes of war how we may, this was a stirring sight. It revealed a latent patriotism which we little expected.

My brethren, make a strong sympathetic appeal to the young people whom we have striven during their tender years to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to put their religion to the test, to fulfil its obligations, to follow the ideal, to spend themselves in loving service for the advancement of the kingdom of God, to unite with the Christian Church in its most sacred objects, and I am very much mistaken if we do not find them ready to respond to the call, and to forsake trivial pleasures and pastimes for a nobler work.

Try it, and you will find that what the Christian Endeavour appeal has done for Evangelical orthodoxy, a similar appeal will do for our Church life. Neglect it, and you will neglect a most glorious opportunity for a real Forward Movement for the promotion of the cause of Truth, Religion, and Humanity.

The REV. JOHN BYLES, Northampton, opened the discussion. He said :—

There are special reasons why this subject is of importance to our churches, and one of them is this, that all the great societies, the great world outside, are continually against us. Why, even if a young man gets engaged, the chances are that the young woman says to him, 'I will go to any Nonconformist church in the town which you like, but I will not go to the Unitarian.' And so there is the greater need for us to do what we can to retain the young people in connection with our churches. What I have tried to do—and I hope I have not been entirely unsuccessful—has been to inspire and to implant those seeds which bring forth life; because I have always known, and I increasingly feel, that life is the great builder and the great organizer; and I have felt if I could get life into the hearts of our young people they would be sure to build up their own life out of character and action and conduct. Of course, the outward form that the life takes, and the outward organization, is not always exactly that which one would have suggested, or perhaps exactly that of which one approves; but in any case it is the organization and the building which is natural to the life within, and, therefore, is the real thing. Now this brings me to the criticism which I have been in the habit of directing against these Christian Endeavour Societies. I know they are very vast, and I am quite sure that they have accomplished an enormous amount of good; but I have always thought, perhaps somewhat hastily, that they had a weak side. It seems to me, and I am sure I shall carry you with me in this, that the one thing we have to seek for in dealing with the religious life of the young, and indeed in dealing with the religious life of all people, is reality. The one thing that is precious is sincerity, the one thing we have to dread is insincerity, whether the insincerity be conscious or unconscious; and, therefore, I have always felt that for young people or any other people to come together regularly week after week for the avowed object of expressing their feelings, carrying on a sort of process of introspection, and then of displaying that which they discover or think they discover, must sooner or later tend to a degree of insincerity and untruthfulness. Now, what is the Christian canon that comes out of it? It seems to me to be this: organize your young people, but don't organize them that they may think a great deal about themselves, or that they may have an opportunity of overmuch expressing their religious feelings and emotions. Organize them for service, for activity. I think that is what Jesus² did. He said, if you want to come with Me and be My disciple, what? Look inside and see what is going on there, and tell us about it? Not a bit of it. You take up your cross, the first that comes, and follow

Me, and don't lay it down till the end is reached. Therefore, although I am heartily at one with Mr. Ellis in his desire that there should be an organization of our young people, I would say let the main object of it be organization for service and not organization for the expression of sentiment. Of course it must be religious, but then it seems to me there is all the difference in the world between common prayer, with the expression of a supposed common sentiment, and individual expression of individual feeling. I have infinite faith in the religion of children. We ought to cherish it most tenderly. It is a very sacred thing; it does not do to play with it. We cannot take up the little seedling out of the ground and play with it with our fingers without destroying it; and you cannot play with the little spiritual life that is springing up in the heart of a child without marring it and injuring it. Religion ought to be there, only it is to come out of life, and that life, my friends, is first in the hearts of fathers and mothers, and ministers and teachers. There is a beautiful little bit in dear old John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' towards the end in the second part, which I often think of. You know when Christian set out upon his journey what a bad time he had. He had a great burden, which he carried night and day, and could not rest by day and could not sleep by night; and he had to go through the Slough of Despond. But when the boys set off with their mother, Bunyan says they fell into tears, and they cried to go after their father. That was all. No self-consciousness, no big burden, no slough of despond—but a father who had gone the right way, and boys who said 'we will go after our father.' It was because life produces life; and if we have life in our Sunday school teachers, and life in fathers and mothers, in the family and in the pulpit, we are bound sooner or later to have life in the boys and girls and young men and maidens by whom we are surrounded. But we do want to retain that life in an organic relationship with ourselves, and for this purpose such organizations may be useful. There is a little book here which our friend Mrs. Rawlings—I wish she would put her name upon it—has just brought out, and there you will find a little account, not so long as I should like it to have been, of a marvellous work which took place in America about thirty years ago, called the Henry Wadsworth Societies. Wadsworth was a young man in humble position, who gave his life for the service of his fellow-men; and the life of that simple man, who died at twenty-one years of age, was so fruitful and pregnant, with results that in a very few years nearly 70,000 young people had banded themselves together in various Societies, which took their rise distinctly and definitely from his example; and their three mottoes were—look outward, not inward—and there is no better motto for boy or man; look upward and not downward, look onward and not backward, and lend a hand. Now if we can carry those mottoes into our organizations

I think they will be entirely helpful. We want in our churches something that answers to the Confirmation Service in the Church of England. There is a lot of latent religious life in the hearts of young people, and we want to bring it in a very simple, humble, quiet way to a head, as it were, that they may in some solemn hour consecrate themselves to the service of God and of man. That was a beautiful service that we had last night, and we saw the *via dolorosa*, the way of the Cross, on which the Great Master went so long ago, and with bowed heads we all felt that if we would be true and loyal to Him, that was the way in which we also had to tread. And some such service as that in connection with our churches, to which the young people are invited, might, I think, confirm and strengthen the resolutions which without a doubt they are continually making. May God help us to be faithful in these matters, may we all work for the inspiration and the quickening, and then the ripening of our young people, for the service not of our church alone but also of mankind.

MISS EDITH GITTINS, Leicester :

The thoughts I wish to lay before you will be better indicated by the word *develop* than by the word *organize*. It seems to me that that word covers all. It is the one thing needful. That the tender plants in the garden of the world should grow according to their own proper nature and show forth all individual loveliness is so much our chief aim and purpose that nothing else matters. The world's ways change and our ways have to change with them. The good and beautiful old custom of family prayer has succumbed to the haste and pressure of life. There are multitudes of books, and helpful books, which foster the religious spirit, but which by their multitude and their import tend to leave the people less read. Even the recognition of the source of all mercies, which we curiously call saving grace, is largely abandoned among us, and not for reasons that are all bad. We must not argue from these changes that the spirit of religion is dying. I believe it is alive and effective, and exercising a wider influence than perhaps it ever did, in the heart where it exists at all, over life and thought and conduct. But such losses as I have just noted lead to the thought that we must supply other opportunities of religious culture and religious expression; and it is from a feeling of that kind that the guilds have arisen in connection with our churches. I should like just to put in one word of dislike to the use of single virtues to designate these guilds—'Mercy,' 'Kindness,' 'Courtesy,' even in the case of the snowdrop band 'Purity.' It seems to suggest a limitation of the scope of Christian duty and obligation, and in this connection we may well say, 'Is Christ divided?' Put on the whole armour of God. The use of the guilds has been indicated by the previous speakers, and I join with them in the hope that they expressed, that they may weld

together young and old, and taught and teachers, and those who are merging from boyhood and girlhood with those who are bearing the burden and heat of the day. There is just one beautiful word of Christ's which seems to me exactly to express our need and our duty here; how he said, 'I call you no more servants, I call you friends;' and it is just at that moment that we with all reverence and gentleness may say to our growing boys and girls, 'I call you no more scholars and children, I call you friends.' If we can do that we do all.

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND, M.A., Highgate:

I have listened to the paper of Mr. Ellis with great interest; but I fear I shall not be able to add anything to it, it is so full of suggestion and so comprehensive. What little I say of course must necessarily have to do with young people's organization and work in America, because that is the place where I have had my home and work. Two movements have come to the American churches within this century, that have been practically full of inspiration and have tended especially to give new life, activity and advancement to religion and to the churches in that country. One is the Foreign Missionary movement that arose early in the century, and the other is the organization of the young people of the various churches for distinctly religious ends. That came later. That began with the organization of Young Men's Christian Associations. It was coming to be very widely felt that the church was losing in ways that it could not afford to lose. Its young people were drifting away, its young men—always a source of power too precious to lose in any case—the young men were drifting away from the churches, going into other things; giving their energies and spending the strength of their manhood on other causes; and the church felt it could not be afforded. And so there was organized this Young Men's Christian Association movement, for the express purpose of getting hold of the young men, giving them something to do distinctly religious, something into which they could put their splendid powers of brain and heart; and in a very few years time it came to pass that in hardly one of our larger or more important cities did there fail to be organized and put into operation a vigorous Young Men's Christian Association. This work went on for a considerable time. By and by the consciousness grew that this did not cover the whole ground. Young men, fortunately, are not all the young people that we have in this world. There is another side. Then also this movement tended rather to take the older of the young men, and it left many of the younger of the boys just passing out of the Sunday School and coming to manhood not quite reached. And then another thing. The Young Men's Christian Association tended a little to take these young men out of the churches,—it set them to religious activities,—very excellent ones—but they were out of

the churches; so that the churches did not feel they were gaining the strength and help that they ought to from their young life. So as a next step there arose this Christian Endeavour Movement, which seemed to meet the want admirably, because it included both young men and young women, and it began with a rather younger class and organized itself distinctly in connection with the churches. Well, the Congregationalists, the Presbyterians, the Baptists and the Methodists took it up. Soon the Baptists organized by themselves exactly on the same lines, but called their movement the Baptist Young People's Christian Union; and the Methodists also organized by themselves, calling their movement the Banner League. But they are part of the same great movement, and now you cannot find an important church in any of the leading denominations in America that does not have its Young People's Society as much a part of the church life and work as preaching on Sunday morning, and it is regarded as a vital part of the work. And so out of this view, so finely met in the other churches, grew our own movement; and I can testify that we are feeling the spiritual and religious thrill of it all through our churches. The Universalist body began this form of organization a little earlier than we did, and it has a larger membership. Its Young People's Christian Union has been going on about twice as long as ours and is about twice as large. I know many of the leading men, and they feel profoundly that nothing that has come into their church life for a long time has had so much to do in quickening the church itself as well as saving the young people and bringing them into the church. The same is being felt by our Unitarian churches. I think if you asked the leading ministers in America who are really in the work and understand its needs, you would find they generally say that nothing has come into our life within recent years that has done so much for our churches as this Young People's Religious Union work.

REV. E. F. NICHOLAS, America :

I have just a duty speech to make or I would not trespass upon your time. At the annual meeting of our Young People's Society at which I was re-elected vice-president, I objected to that re-election because I said I should be out of the country. The President's reply defeated my purpose,—‘All the better, you can represent us in England.’ I have not had much opportunity; but I feel that I must to-day tell you how pleased I am to hear that you are looking our way, that you are watching the movement which we have started, and which we have found so successful, and that you are thinking of going and doing likewise. I can assure you that whatever you do in this way will be a success, and that you need not worry so much about the organization. If you will start it going the young people will take it up and carry it on to a success you little dream of. That has been our

experience, and it is to the Young People's Religious Union that we are now looking for more strength than to any other movement which our church has taken up of late years. I shall be very glad when I go back to tell the young people of what you are planning, and I hope sincerely that you will carry it out.

The CHAIRMAN :

Several names of speakers have been handed up ; but I think we have given this discussion a fair amount of time and now must close it. I am sure we all sympathise with the resolutions which Mr. Ellis has read to us, and I would suggest to him that, instead of putting those resolutions formally to this meeting, he lay them before the Conference Committee, which will undoubtedly give them all the attention that they deserve. I understand that Mr. Ellis is perfectly willing to adopt that course, and, therefore, we will now proceed to the second Paper, by Mr. A. H. Worthington, B.A., on

THE FUTURE SUPPLY OF MINISTERS.

When your committee did me the honour of asking me to read a short paper at this Conference on the training of our ministers, or some cognate subject, I hesitated about acceding to the request for many reasons ; but finding that the invitation was elastic enough to include the subject set down to my name, and profoundly believing that the future supply of the ministry to the congregations represented at this Conference is one of the most vital problems that they have to solve, I took courage and shut my eyes to the many reasons urging the easier course, and made up my mind to offer 'my mite towards the solution.

'Fools step in where angels fear to tread,' and I am no angel. Yet I do not fail to see the difficulties in the way of a frank and real Conference on this question. Fully recognising these—and they are patent to all who have seriously considered it—I nevertheless believe that the discussion should be no futile one, and that if we will fearlessly, with open minds, strive to get at the root of the matter, we may do a real service to the congregations of which we are members.

There seem to me two points on which we should fix our attention. Firstly, what manner of men are wanted for the ministry ?

Secondly, where and how can they be found? First, then, what is wanted? I desire here to record my profound admiration and respect for the main body of our present ministers, and not the least for those who in small chapels, or in isolated districts, surrounded and hampered by a crowd of difficulties and disadvantages—financial, social, and personal—often almost ostracised from the intellectual, social, and religious circles which by right should welcome them, who still have manfully exercised their ministry as only those could who had received a call to the ministry of Christ and faithfully obeyed it. I have in many ways had the privilege of witnessing the splendid and unselfish service of the ministry of our congregations under conditions the hardships and the disappointments of which none know fully but the ministers themselves and He whom they serve.

Who am I, indeed, I may ask myself, to offer a word of criticism? And my answer is: I do not, and I will not. Still, may we not all agree that there is much room for improvement, that more toilers in the vineyard are wanted, that the service is one which knows not perfection, and that it behoves us to see if something may not be possible to help in providing more and better equipped servants of the Lord.

I have many near relations and close friends in the ministry, and I am confident that the members of this Conference may in this matter, as in others, strain their eyes for a glimpse of the ideal, and without thought of self, with singleness of aim, endeavour after a nearer and nearer approach to it; and this, too, if only the eye be kept on what we are seeking, without offence or wound to any.

What, then, is wanted? First and foremost men who have received in some measure the Spirit of Christ. This is the call which must come to each one who is to be a true minister, and without which nothing availeth. Next, an educated and cultured ministry. True, a prophet is born, not made; and if such be called to the ministry, the education and training given him will, at least, not crush his gift nor prevent him from delivering his message. But we have to do with the rank and file. They, surely, are heavily handicapped, if they are without that all-round education and

culture which makes them equally at home in all grades of social and intellectual life. In no calling is this more essential than in the minister's. Will anyone say that, on the whole, a minister so equipped is by virtue of these gifts less qualified even for the poorest chapel or mission? Is the educated clergyman less of a power by reason of his education in the poor country parish, or in the 'East-end' of any great city? Granted that religious zeal and the sympathy born of intimacy are first; trained mental power and knowledge gained only by real and thorough education are a good second. We all have experience, however little our own knowledge or power, and whatever our social lot, how real and discriminating may be the help of the more highly trained and educated mind. Men and women in all classes will more and more think for themselves; their minds are increasingly day by day reached through literature good and bad, the press, the club, the school, the society, friends and acquaintances, and in a hundred other ways, by the thoughts and words of other minds. Those who are to lead and guide them to higher things, to protect and to teach them to shield themselves from pernicious and soul-destroying influences, to answer their intellectual doubts, to prove to them the saving power of faith, to teach them righteousness, need to be equipped at all points. Alas! in how many cases may not defects, due to the want of a liberal education, impede the minister in his work.

There is one more word I want to say as to the kind of men wanted. It must be admitted, I fear, that latterly a smaller and smaller proportion of those entering the ranks of our ministry have come from the families nurtured in the group of congregations in which they are to minister. This ministry must ever be as open and free as our churches, and must ever welcome into its ranks all good and faithful servants of the Lord, who find in it their natural field of work, from whatever communion they come; and how much its power and influence would have been diminished without the vivifying influence of many of those who have entered it from other religious societies, will be realised by a glance through the names on the ministerial roll. But woe to the religious community which

does not feel the inspiration of its faith deeply enough to furnish from within the greater proportion of those who are to lead, to guide, and to inspire it; aye, deeply enough to send from the homes of its more cultured families not a few of the flower of their youth, in whom the great truths which have been and are the life-blood of our community, are bred in the bone and are part of the very marrow of their souls.

To sum up my first point, I submit, nay, confidently assert, that the men wanted are those touched by the spirit which calls them to the work, humbly and devoutly taking the vow to fit themselves to preach the gospel of righteousness, equipped and armed by a wide and deep culture, and largely drawn from the best material in our own community.

Second: Where and how can they be found, and what means are to hand of helping the call to the ministry to reach them? I have heard ministers and laymen speak as if they thought there was no hope, and even no need, of making any move in this direction. My reply to such a view is, I trust, 'the retort courteous'; that I 'am in the mind that' there is pressing need, and I firmly believe there is high hope, nay certainty, if we as a community will only grasp some of that faith which removes mountains. If, on the other hand, we care so little for the cause that we are content to 'let things take their course,' to take it philosophically if our sons and daughters are untouched by our or any other religious influence, to confess to one another confidentially that the special influence of our community is dwindling and must continue to do so, to say to ourselves and to one another, and to let our sons feel, that it is the last thing we should desire to see them enter the ministry now-a-days:—then, indeed, there is no hope.

This brings us to the very kernel of the question. Do we, in the bottom of our hearts, believe that there is work in the world for such a ministry, and that there is no nobler, no higher calling than this? If we do, youths will be found to press forward to reach the mark, and to take upon themselves the burden of the service. It is not a question of looking round for likely young

men in Sunday-schools, nor the offering of cheap and almost free education, nor the raising of salaries and pensions, nor the offering of any other advantages, though all of these in their place and degree may be useful helps. The problem is deeper. We do not try seriously and strenuously enough to strengthen our own and one another's belief in the sacred calling, and to let the sons of our faith feel our belief, so that if they are blessed by the call they may know that their dearest and nearest will help them to cherish the heavenly gift. Let them feel that at home, at school, at college, at worship, they are in an atmosphere of this belief; and, then, in not a few of the purest and ablest of these young lives will the seed be planted and will blossom.

How do we know what may be stirring in the young heart ready to leap into life, if only his home, his master, his friend, be ready to respond; and which may—oh! how easily—be crushed, if he feels that his yearning will or would, if known, find a cold reception from those he loves, respects, and confides in?

I think our community sadly neglects the religious education of the young. I doubt if there is any religious community in Christendom which leaves the religious education of its youth, and especially of the youth of its more cultivated portion, so entirely to chance as ours, or is more casual in its measures for providing for the succession of its ministry.

What steps to this end are taken at home and in the chapel? What of the schools? Youth is the impressionable time. Youth goes seeking a call for the knightly vow. How far do we ensure that he shall meet with this challenge to knightly service?

I will venture to indicate some ways in which I think more might be done than is done. First, then, look to your children. Truly has it been said that 'the children of one generation are the trustees of posterity.' Every chapel has its Sunday-school for children who are supposed to specially lack religious instruction and influence at home. Are we sure that all those parents in the congregation who do not think of sending their children to the Sunday-school, fail to do so, because

they are satisfied that religious instruction and influence is sufficiently provided at home?

How many ministers' classes are there to which the more educated members of the congregation send their children? Here parents and ministers must help each other. If both felt the need, and combined to meet it throughout our congregations, a great gap in the religious education of our children would be filled up.

Again, take the school life. In the public and other schools, the boy will constantly be struck with the divergence of what he hears in the holidays at home and at chapel, from what is taught at school; or, perhaps, he feels that the school teaching is not what he is supposed to believe in and is merely a matter of form. How easily all religious teaching and influence may become to him indifferent. That our sons *may* receive deep and lasting religious influence under these conditions, and do so in some cases, must be freely allowed; but, I think, anyone facing the facts must own that indifference is often the result.

If we value the religious influences that have nurtured and guided us, then it behoves us to consider carefully for our sons what the school atmosphere is in this respect. I believe that one of the most vital needs for our community is a great public school in which the education, physical, mental, and moral, shall be equal to that of the great schools to which our sons are increasingly going, and where, moreover, the religious training shall be on our lines; where our children may feel that they breathe from their teachers and in the school chapel the same religious atmosphere as at home; where the lessons in religion will never be a question of grinding up a number of verses from the Bible, unexplained, or, if explained, yet in a quite different way to what they hear at home; where the school service shall not be partly the repetition of a creed which they know their parents do not believe, or wish them to believe; but where religion shall be taught as they have heard it at their mother's knee and in the family pew.

And such a school we are to have. The far-sighted gener-

osity of the late Philip Barker has founded at Nantwich, near Crewe, in grounds in the heart of a beautiful and healthy district, the Willaston School. Already many other generous friends,—to be followed, I doubt not, by such an army of benefactors as will make Founders' Day at Willaston a memorable red-letter day,—are supplementing the original foundation in a way which shows that the need was keenly felt, and that our community, now that the lead has been given, will not turn back till a great school is firmly established, fully equipped with teachers, buildings, scholarships—to be held there, and to lead thence to the Universities, and all the other paraphernalia needful, and permeated with the spirit of our congregations. It is a remarkable fact, that the same need has been felt among our kindred across the sea, and an inspiring coincidence that the same year which sees the foundation of our school here marks the birth of her twin sister there. I see that later in the proceedings of this Conference, a resolution commemorating James Martineau is to be moved. I trust that in this connection, grave consideration may be given to a suggestion that, as a memorial, a fund be raised for scholarships to be held by ministers' sons at Willaston. If from among the succeeding generations of 'Martineau' scholars should spring a succession of ministers not unworthy of the ministry to which he gave his life, then, indeed, would this Conference have raised a fitting memorial. It only remains for you to ensure the success of this school. Buildings, teachers, and scholarships will come—I have little fear as to that—will increase and improve and multiply according to the need. Will you send your sons? Is your religion part of your life? Have you found in it your inspiration in all the best and noblest things you have done? Do you desire your children to grow up guided by the same inspiration, worshipping in the same open temple of the living God, and handing on the same tradition to your grandchildren and succeeding generations? If 'yes,' then here is a way which I firmly believe will do more than anything else to achieve your purpose. Send your sons to Willaston, and especially those of you who are the salt of our churches; and let a Willaston boy come to mean a boy who will grow up into a man as earnest and strong in the service of his fellow-men

as our leading ministers and laymen have been in the past; who will like them, find his religious home in our community, and worship in the spirit and in the places from which those who have gone before him have drawn their inspiration. In this school, friendships will be formed between boys to be continued at college, which in later life will mean much in our religious and congregational life. An old Willastonian in the pulpit and half-a-dozen in the pew, would mean a good deal in the work of a congregation; a group of them in a college, a university, a town—is it too much to dream of a future in which the influence of the successors to the congregations whom we represent would be such as it has never been before? Surely here, if we will use it, is to be a happy hunting-ground for the supply of the ministers of the future. From such soil should spring up the backbone of the future ministry.

To pass on to another point. I think more might be done by parents and ministers to kindle and foster in the young committed to their charge, the spirit to which the call to the ministry may come. Who would argue that a parent should press a child to take upon himself the cross of the ministry? It is not like other walks of life. And yet, why should parents, ready enough to suggest, nay, to urge, the idea of medicine, law, commerce, or what not, scrupulously guard against any suggestion of the highest calling, and even show a son whose thoughts may have been led in that direction, that they look coldly upon it? It is surely taking a grave responsibility to crush or damp any movement in the young soul that urges him to think of these things. How easily is the spark extinguished which, with a little sympathy, might grow into a flame! Let parents give readily their best and brightest to the service of God, and let ministers seek them out, if haply they may be the means of sowing the seed. If ministers believe in the sacredness of their calling, let them see that all those committed to their charge shall feel it also.

I believe that far more of the direct appeal on this subject, especially by our ablest and best ministers, to the youth of our community is desirable. I do not recollect ever to have heard one of our ministers give the call to the ministry from the pulpit. No doubt the whole life and teaching of the faithful minister is the most effectual

call ; but the direct appeal in many things just gives the finishing touch which makes the difference between passive yearning and action. On this point, I suggest that from time to time some one of our ministers, best fitted to do so, should put his heart into an address directly appealing to our best youths to enter the ministry, which should be available for use by ministers and laymen. If something might be done in this direction by the minister, how much more could he do in intimate, personal, individual intercourse with the youth of his congregation. When the confidence of a young heart full of aspirations and hopes is gained, it is taking too great a responsibility on his shoulders for the minister to whisper in his ear, nay, strongly urge, the Master's call to follow him and preach his gospel ? What is the ministry for, if it is not to give this message, and to lead souls to the highest service of God ?

Another point I have to urge. Let our sons see that we hold our ministers in honour, that they have our highest respect, that they are ever welcome guests in our social and our home circles ; let them and theirs be counted among our friends. That this depends not only on us laymen, but also on our ministers, is true enough ; but it is for us laymen to take the first step, and to go a great deal more than half way.

How often, I fear, is not the minister forgotten or slighted thoughtlessly, on occasions when it is his right to be remembered and honoured, and our bounden duty to see that his right is not neglected. What, again, are our sons to think of our regard for our ministers when they find out the amount of his salary, and perchance the amount of our contribution to it ?

My last point is this. We want more method than we have in providing for the ministry of the future. It is left far too much to chance.

It is not enough for us to know the kind of men that are wanted, to have a general idea of the various ways in which the ministry may be brought before possible or probable candidates for it, but to leave the initiation entirely to individual effort and thought. Combination and united action are wanted. If the material is not to be found in our community, if this ministry cannot appeal with convincing force

to the purer and stronger spirits amongst us, then, indeed, any combined effort on our part would be but beating the air, and any attempt to organize this search for the right men would be but ploughing the sands. Granted,—and, indeed, in this matter we must grant this, if we are not to be the victims of despair;—granted, that our community must have within it and on its borders the right material, and that the ministry in our churches is a field from which a rich harvest may be garnered; then I say emphatically, that there is great need of combined action to find the reapers—reapers chosen and trained for the work, and not drifted into it by a number of accidental causes.

Other religious communities look to this much more carefully than we. They do not leave it to chance. I do not urge, I need not explain, that there should be any imitation of the rigid methods of exclusion and training that others may find advisable.

I do urge, however, that we require some Board or Council, constituted of those who best know the needs and the materials of our community in this, and whose special function it shall be to see that the vocation of the ministry shall come before our youth, and to be ready to advise and encourage, and, if need be, to help them on their way to it. Colleges we have ready to train them, but colleges cannot go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come in. We want a Board selected from our leading ministers and laymen representing all parts of the country; not too small to be representative, and above all not so large as to be unworkable, and to divide the responsibility till it is hardly felt. It should be in touch with some one—if not in every congregation, at least in every district—through whom it can act and by whom it can be kept informed. Such a Board would, I imagine, by such methods as may seem best, including, I believe, some of those I have indicated, see that the call to the ministry should permeate all the veins of our community and congregational life, and should be prepared to give counsel and help, through its representatives or direct, to any possible or probable candidate. This Conference seems to me precisely the body which might take this matter up. Its committee, by a recent resolution, has been given executive powers. If there

is to be such a Board, it will not evolve itself, it requires to be constituted. What body can realise the necessities of the case like the Conference of the congregations whose ministry is to be provided for; where, if not here, will the vital and fundamental importance of the question be realised; where, if not here, are we to look for the motive power and instructed skill to set in motion and guide the machinery?

Unless the Conference does realise the crying need, unless it has faith in the message of our ministry, and belief that there will be men to be found who will be worthy and able to deliver it, then, indeed, our religious influence on our nation is destined to wane. Let us throw down the gauntlet. This question is in our hands: are we going to own to defeat before we have fairly entered the lists? I have done my best to make my main point. Unless you show that there is no need of improvement, or no possibility, or, admitting the need and possibility, that this Conference can do nothing, then, I say, it is for you to take up this challenge and for your committee to prepare the scheme of a Board or Council representing this Conference, that shall charge itself with the responsibility of leaving no stone unturned, no means neglected, which offers the slightest chance of providing the requisite number of the right kind of men for our ministry. I believe in striking while the iron is hot, and if my view, that this Conference is the right body for the purpose, meets with general approval, I trust you will instruct your committee to take this matter in hand. I have advisedly not propounded a cut-and-dried scheme—that is a work for many heads of different experience—and even if I were prepared with one, I think this would not be the occasion to consider a first draft: the discussion would be bound to run off on minor points. It is enough now to ask: Is such a Board as I have suggested needed? Are we united and strong enough to found one? Is this Conference the body to establish it?

Yes, I answer to all three questions—confidently, unhesitatingly, and after chewing the cud of this question with some of the patience of a ruminating animal. We are too careless in this matter; too ready to let things take their course; too prone to see only the

difficulties and discouragements. Are we satisfied with things as they are? Do we believe that, without strong combined action, the religious community into which we have been born or received need have no anxiety for the future of its ministry? If we are frank, must we not rather admit that there are growing signs of detachment and disintegration, especially in the circles which have been the very life-blood of our community?

I see a vision of a ministry, more and more largely recruited from the ranks of the best that our churches can offer, in closer and closer sympathy and friendship with those who among our congregations are the pillars of our faith, and I believe that if such a vision can be realised, the detaching and disintegrating forces will find a counter-force stronger than they.

And is there not in this pleasure-loving and wealth-seeking age a greater and nobler work than ever for such a ministry as ours ought to be, made up of men who seek to preach only the *truth* as it is given to them, with *liberty*, untrammelled by test or creed, striving to make their *religion* the law of their own and their hearers' lives? There is no finer field for any ministry than for ours, but the husbandmen for this work must be of the best, men so inspired that they can inspire others, aglow with kindling fire, armed at all points with the armour of righteousness and knowledge. The call for such men comes from the Heavenly Father; His spirit bloweth where He listeth, and the seed of His word is sown broadcast. Are not we faithful enough to be fellow-labourers? Can we do nothing to clear and till the ground, to lay it open to the breathings of the spirit and to prepare it for the seed?

MR. CHARLES W. JONES, Liverpool:

You have heard that the two openers of the debate are not here, and I have been called upon at the last moment to open it. I presume in doing so I should criticise the paper; but I have not found anything in it to criticise. I believe every word of it. One part of it touched me seriously,—that appeal to fathers to send their sons into the ministry. No one in this room knows how gladly I would have given both my sons to the ministry; but it is not an easy thing to do. You cannot advise your son to

go into the ministry as you can advise him to go into a shipowner's office, or to the law. You can avoid doing what our parents are constantly doing, emphasizing the disadvantages and disappointments of the ministry; and if you see the slightest signs of their wish to enter it you can encourage them. I think a little too much is made by parents of the disappointments of the ministry. Of course I know, having had a father and two brothers ministers, how disappointing it sometimes is. But then I have known barristers to be disappointed, and artists to be disappointed. I have even known shipowners and cotton brokers to be disappointed. It is not the ministry only that is disappointing; but when it is a success it brings to the heart more satisfaction than the shipowner can get out of his work. I think it is the greatest work our sons can undertake, and it is to me a very great disappointment that more of them do not engage in it. I feel, too, that we do not get the right men into our ministry. I believe in a learned ministry, and even at the loss of some of the ministers that we have, and may be going to have, I should like it to be obligatory on all ministers in our denomination to pass through Manchester College. I don't mean to say that if you got bad material the College would make it good; but if a man has the proper spirit and grit in him, he will be all the better for having to go through a training such as he gets at the College. You have spoken a good deal about Willaston School. I think it will be a great success. Now we may make an appeal to the fathers of our sons. We cannot ask them to press them to go into the ministry against their wish; but parents don't generally allow their children to choose their own schools, and therefore I hope our parents will choose Willaston School for them. That is a thing we can all do. Well now, sir, you say we cannot bring men into the ministry by offering them salaries and pensions. There is another side to this question. I don't say we can; but we need not debar them by the risk of starvation when they get there. I have drawn rather a severe line as to whom I would have in the ministry, and I would draw just as strong a line as to what I would pay. I would not have a single minister in our denomination who did not get £300 a year. I know perfectly well some of them are not worth it, I have heard it over and over again. But I say if a minister is not worth £300 a year, for goodness sake let us do without him. Then there is another inducement I would give. I don't mean to say you can induce people to come into the ministry of our congregations simply for the pay; I should be sorry if you could; but I do think we ought to have not only certain minimum salaries, but also maximum salaries. I don't see any reason at all why we should not, in fact I see many reasons why we should, have at least five of our churches where the minister is paid £1,000 a year. I should like to put it at £2,000; but I know some people would be shocked at that because they

think it would be too much. They don't think a minister should be very rich. I don't see why he should not. I cannot help thinking myself that if most of the members of the congregation drive down in their carriages, the minister might follow in his. At a church that I went to many years, the minister drove regularly in his carriage, and I never found he was anything the worse for it. I did not find that his congregation respected him any the less, or that he was the least bit slack in his work. I never knew a minister in our body who was more respected than he; and we were glad he had not to walk down on a wet day. That I will not call an inducement, but I do wish I could get out of the heads of our rich people that it is a bad thing to pay our ministers too much. I don't say it would weigh very much with the fathers, but I believe it would weigh—if you will excuse my saying so—very much with the mothers of the young men; and I don't blame them for it. Well, sir, you have put some very practical ideas before us of a board of organization for getting a better class of men into our ministry, and a larger class, because really we get too few; and I think there is a great deal in what you suggest. I should be very glad to do what I could to foster such a board, but I don't know whether that is everything or whether it would do very much. Other bodies complain they don't get the right people. The Presbyterians I know do, and the Methodists also. I don't hear the Church of England saying so; but if I may say so without any disrespect to the Church of England, they never did get the right people. We suffer in this way because we do not care enough for our religion. We are not earnest enough about it. We don't bring up our children, whether they are going to be ministers or laymen, to care enough about our religion. We do not set them the example we should do, and I believe that is the case with other denominations as well as our own. We might educate our children to take up for themselves more of the work of the churches, and to help the ministers. We may encourage them in these things, and as far as it is in our power I think we ought to do so.

REV. C. J. STREET, M.A., LL.B., Bolton :

I find myself in very general agreement with the paper, and with the remarks that have been made by Mr. Jones. At the same time I don't want it to be thought for a moment that our ministry is less of a learned ministry than it was in past times. I have a higher opinion of our ministry to-day than a good many other people seem to have, and I think it is exceedingly discouraging for some of our men who have done their very best, when they hear remarks made as they do—I don't say they have been made this afternoon, but I have heard them at other meetings—remarks

which imply that our men are inferior to their forefathers. I do not believe it; or that they are inferior to the ministers of other denominations. I believe that the conditions of the ministerial life are completely altered in the present generation, and it is utterly impossible for a minister to be to-day what his father or grandfather was before him. At the same time I thoroughly sympathise with the main point in the paper, that it is most desirable that the ranks of our ministry should be recruited as far as possible from a rather different class than that to which I and most of the other ministers belong. In other words, I think we want a considerable amount of recruiting from our old historic families nurtured in freedom and, equally as important, trained from generation to generation in honourable and successful methods of commercial enterprise. I am quite sure that is the element which is wanting in the ministry of the present day; and I am quite sure that our ministry would be more able to grapple with the needs of the present day if it were trained and qualified in this direction. But, ladies and gentlemen, what inducements do you offer to men of that kind to go into the ministry? Our ministry especially, which is handicapped from the very beginning by the fact that we have arrayed against us practically all the churches. A man who becomes a Unitarian minister knows he is cutting himself adrift from all the rest. He is shut out not only from connection with the established church, but from the evangelical free churches; and he has to stand almost, if not entirely, alone. That is a hard sacrifice you are asking from him in the first instance. But there is more than that. Mr. Jones has referred to one of the points I wish to call attention to. You are demanding greater sacrifices of the man whom you call to your ministry than any other church is asking of its ministers. You are giving him a small salary for the most part, you are giving him a precarious tenure, you are placing him in a position of inability to provide satisfactorily for his family while he is living; you are preventing him, because of the small salary, from making a satisfactory arrangement for his old age; you are making the position of his widow and children that he leaves behind him exceedingly precarious and dangerous. And if you are asking members of our comfortable middle class families to devote their young men to the service of the ministry, remember that involves a greater sacrifice for them than it does for many of us who have not been brought up under such circumstances. You are asking them to leave comfortable homes and surroundings, and to go through a period of poverty and penury and struggle of which many people in this room cannot yet conceive; and I say there is some excuse for the fact that we do not find so many young men ready to come forward from our leading families when the conditions are as they are. May I point out another reason why I think there is not such a supply of the right kind of ministers as we should

desire? I think our churches generally want a higher conception of what the office of the minister really is than they possess at this moment. Some of them would seem to look upon him as though he were to be only a Sunday lecturer, or an organizer of classes and institutions during the week. I am far from the position of advocating that the minister is in any sense of the word to be a priest. That is the farthest extreme from my thought and desire; I have no sympathy with that kind of ecclesiasticism. But I do hold, if a minister is to be true to the highest ideal, he is to be a prophet, which is a very different thing from a priest; and are you making it easy for ministers to be prophetic to-day? You want a less grudging acceptance on the part of the congregation of the principle of the freedom of the pulpit. We are often asked, 'Why don't you preach to us about Jesus and his disciples, and the lessons of his life and their life in Palestine? Why go out of your way to bring the application of their religious principles to bear upon the practical questions of the present day?' It makes it extremely difficult for a minister if he is for a moment to be supposed to have his tongue tied. There are many of our ministers, most of them I am glad to say, who refuse to have their tongues tied, and who are ready to take the consequences,—and sometimes they have to take them, and very unpleasant they are. But at the same time a man should not be put into that position, because his congregation ought to be ready to give him the utmost liberty and latitude as a prophet. 'Let practical morality in business and in society alone,' we ministers are sometimes told. 'Don't interfere with society concerns and with business affairs of which you are supposed to know nothing, but let business men go on with their work in their own way.' However much gambling and speculation there may be, let the minister have nothing to say! Be silent in national emergencies such as that before the nation to-day, and from the pulpit say not a word on behalf of Christ's Gospel of Peace at a time when the nation is at war, we are told again and again; and even some of our ministers, I am astonished to see, are actually complaining that other ministers belonging to their body have signed a manifesto as ministers—as though they had no right to do anything of the kind. Surely we are forgetting all the traditions of our church, we are forgetting everything that we have stood for, and our forefathers have stood for, in the past. There are many ministers in this room whose theological opinions I don't agree with, and whom it would be very difficult for me, I dare say, to 'sit under,' as the phrase goes, and listen to with any feeling of comfort. And yet do you suppose for a moment I would so deny the principle of a free church that if I were a member of that congregation I should in the slightest degree desire to tie their hands, or seal their lips? Far from it. If we believe in a free church let us be free church, and let us encourage our ministers to

be free. Two other words, if I may be allowed. I want to encourage the practice which has been adopted by some of our congregations, and which is being increasingly adopted, I am glad to say, namely, of having curates or assistant ministers. I believe it is one of the great sources of strength in the Established Church, and it will be a strength to ourselves if that principle is developed; and in connection therewith I wish to say also that there is a grave duty devolving upon our colleges, namely, that they should as far as possible not only give this higher education in which we all believe, and of which we have heard so much, but that they should teach the theory and the art of preaching, of pastoral work, and of public duty, to their students. That has not been done in past times as it should have been. I am glad to say that at Manchester College, Oxford, that work is now being thoroughly done with most perceptible and advantageous results. In the other College, the Unitarian Home Missionary College, many of you will remember the noble work in this direction that was done in years past under the name of Missionary Tutorship, by the late Rev. John Wright, and in later days by our good friend Dr. Brooke Herford, who is with us this afternoon. And I can only hope the Unitarian Home Missionary College will remember its past, and will at the same time take a lesson from what Manchester College is now doing.

REV. J. E. ODGERS, M.A. : I wish to recall, or rather to repeat, two or three words which I said at the last Conference at Sheffield to an almost empty room at the end of the last meeting. I was asked then to repeat what I had said, at the next Conference, wherever it should be, and I have just come desiring to do so. I have been most deeply gratified to find that the main suggestion that I then made has been embodied by Mr. Worthington in his excellent paper. After more than twenty years of work in our colleges, I feel that the future of our ministry ought not to be left to be determined by the Committees of those Colleges, and that it ought to depend a great deal less than it does at present upon the interview which a young man has one day with the Committee or the examiners, and which he has another day with the teachers. We ought to know the men at an earlier stage—somebody ought. Somebody ought to have been able for some time past to give them counsel and leading, and the present state of things, which is very largely casual, ought to come promptly to an end. I agree with Mr. Worthington that the body in connection with which the Academic Board for the future supply of our ministers can be formed, is this National and representative Conference. Now, there are cases in which a young man comes up, whom we none of us know, with a testimonial that says as plainly as possible, 'I don't like to tell this young man he will not make a minister, you do it.' There are cases in which men come up, and you say, 'Oh dear, you say you have been wanting to be a minister for ever so long. Why has not somebody taken

you in hand, and why have not you made use of the opportunities that are there where you are for a little better preparation for coming here? We do not judge for a moment as to whether you have not a keen desire to be a minister, or that you cannot develop the abilities required for the ministry; but what we say is that it would be worse than useless for you to come and enter on the studies of this college, here and now, with the preparation that you bring with you.' Let there be a Board which shall put itself into communication with these young men, show them how to do the best for themselves, where they are unable either to make use, perhaps, of the evening classes of those University Colleges which are now scattered pretty fairly about the length and breadth of our country, or have not the persistence, the perseverance, and the ability to prepare themselves, — I will not say for the entrance examination, but I may say for University learning. There are pathetic cases that come to us, on which I could dilate a little further, but I cannot, because it would be unseemly to enter into particulars, in which it is a question what is to become of a boy of sixteen who wants to go into the ministry, and what is going to make it possible for him to keep on a life of study for two or two-and-a-half years till he is fit to enter a University. Now, I sincerely hope that the Conference will take to heart the recommendations which Mr. Worthington has laid before it, and do its utmost to form, in connection with our free churches, an academic board for providing for the future of our ministry. There need be no public announcement as to precisely what it is doing, but it should have its eye upon young men who will be to it in very much the same relation that students attached to a Scottish Presbytery in preparation for the University and their theological course are to it. I will move, with great pleasure, 'that the Committee of the Conference be instructed to take into consideration the formation of a Board for assisting in providing for the future ministry.'

MR. A. H. WORTHINGTON: I beg leave to second it.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am quite certain after what we have heard, the whole Conference will look upon this resolution with keen sympathy.

The resolution was carried, and the Conference adjourned for the day.

CONVERSAZIONE.

On Wednesday evening, the delegates, along with their hosts and hostesses, attended a reception and conversazione given by the Mayor and Mayoress (Ald. and Mrs. Windley), at the Musuem Buildings and Art Gallery. The Mayoress was unfortunately prevented from attending by indisposition, her place being taken by Miss Windley, B.A. The reception was one of the largest and most successful ever held in Leicester, the number of those present reaching 1,275. All the rooms of the Museum and Art Gallery were used for the occasion, and three were fitted up as refreshment-rooms. The guests were received by the Mayor and Miss Windley in the Mayor's Room, and then passed on into the Lecture Hall of the Art Gallery, in which some admirable selections of music were rendered by the Leicester Permanent Orchestra, whilst the reception was in progress. The Leicester friends presented two beautiful bouquets, one to Mrs. Blake Odgers, and the other to Miss Windley. Subsequently the Mayor, accompanied by Mrs. Blake Odgers, Miss Windley, Mr. Odgers, Q.C., Mr. E. Clephan, and Mr. E. F. Cooper, proceeded to the platform, and his Worship briefly addressed the delegates.

The MAYOR said he desired to be permitted, in the name of the Mayoress, whose enforced absence he much regretted, and in his own name, as representing the inhabitants of that great town, to offer to them an earnest, sincere, and most hearty welcome to Leicester. He did this the more gladly, because he was a member of another Christian Church. While not yielding one jot or tittle of his faith, he would be simply ashamed if he could not meet an assembly such as that, of Christian men and women who might hold different opinions from himself, in a charitable and Christian spirit. Moreover, it gave him an opportunity which rarely occurred, of reciprocating in a very small degree the many kindnesses and courtesies which the members of the Unitarian communion in Leicester had extended to the members of other churches when they had been visiting Leicester in conference. They all believed in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and they might pray for mutual enlightenment on all other questions. He hoped that their meeting in Leicester would have a far-reaching influence for good. Referring

humorously to the exceptionally large number present, Ald. Windley remarked, amidst considerable laughter, that he had never shaken hands with so many heretics in his life. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that they would take away with them pleasant memories of the fraternal meeting which it had been his pleasure and honour to accord them that evening.

Mr. BLAKE ODGERS, Q.C., moved that a hearty vote of thanks be accorded to the Mayor for his great kindness and hospitality that evening, which was all the kinder because his worship was not one of them. They had heard of the good work which the Mayor had done in Leicester; how especially he had worked in sanitary matters, and had done much for the good of the town in that direction. They were glad to be welcomed by the Mayor, and by such a Mayor. They greatly regretted the absence of the Mayoress, and the cause of that absence; but they were glad that Miss Windley had been good enough to take her place.

Mr. E. CLEPHAN seconded the vote of thanks, which was carried amid acclamation.

Two exceedingly pretty items of vocal music followed—a song, ‘Who’ll buy my lavender,’ and a duet, ‘The day is fading,’ by Miss Beatrice and Miss Florence Pratt, each effort being loudly applauded. The following programme of music was gone through by the Leicester Permanent Orchestra:—March, ‘Sons of the Brave’ (Bidgood); overture, ‘Pique dame’ (Suppé); Serenade des Mandolines (Desormes); waltz, ‘Wein Weit und Gesang’ (Strauss); piccolo solo, ‘Danse de Satyrs’ (Le Thiére); selection, ‘Faust’ (Gounod); intermezzo, ‘Mimosa’ (Philp); suite from ‘As you like it’ (German); gavotte, ‘Princess May’ (Kottaun); waltz, ‘Arc en Ciel’ (Waldteufel); march, ‘Militaire’ (Gounod); overture, ‘Raymond’ (Thomas); serenade, ‘Gut nacht’ (Kucken); selection, ‘Carmen’ (Bizet); intermezzo, ‘Sweet brier’ (Squire); cornet solo, ‘Lead, Kindly Light’ (Mark); three dances from ‘Henry VIII.’ (German); Chant sans paroles (Tschaikowsky); Judex from ‘Mors et vita’ (Gounod); waltz, ‘Modestie’ (Waldteufel).

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRD DAY.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5TH.

AT ten o'clock, on Thursday morning, a Devotional Service was conducted by the Rev. J. H. WEATHERALL, M.A., of Carmarthen; and was very numerously attended.

Before entering on the formal business of the day, the PRESIDENT (Mr. W. BLAKE ODGERS, Q.C.), made a reference to the attempted assassination of the Prince of Wales. He said: We have all been astonished and shocked this morning, by reading in the newspapers of a deliberate attempt to assassinate the Prince of Wales in Brussels. Thank God, the attempt failed. I feel sure that I shall readily express the feeling of all present, whatever our views may be on political or other matters, if I submit a resolution expressing our regret that the attempt was made, and our thankfulness to God that it failed. I will, therefore, move—as your President—before we commence to-day's proceedings, this resolution, to be sent to the Prince of Wales: 'That this meeting of Free Churches returns humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God for the preservation of the life of your Royal Highness, and prays that your years may be prolonged in health and prosperity, and in the love and regard of all Her Majesty's faithful subjects.' I also propose that the following resolution be sent to Her Majesty the Queen, the dear old lady, who has ever tried to do her duty in the station to which God has called her, and who at the present moment is visiting our fellow-subjects in Ireland. I propose that we send Her Majesty an expression of our sympathy in the distress which the occurrence must have caused her. I, therefore, move: 'That this meeting of Free Churches offers to your most Gracious Majesty humble and hearty congratulations on the escape of His Royal Highness the

Prince of Wales from assassination, and prays that the throne of your Majesty may be established for long generations to come in the love and honour of all subjects of this realm.'

Dr. JAMES DRUMMOND seconded, and said: 'We may learn from this occurrence how easily people can be misled by false instruction, and the evil teaching of a certain section of the Press. I understand that the youth's pockets were stuffed with Anarchist literature, and I am sure he could have had but little notion of the crime he was committing. This occurrence ought to increase our earnestness in doing what we can to enlighten the world, and carry abroad those principles of devotion to duty and goodwill to all men, which we all have so deeply at heart.

The resolutions were carried unanimously, the audience standing whilst the National Anthem was sung.

Later in the day, the following telegram was received in reply:—

'O. H. M. S.

'Dublin, Vice-Regal Lodge.

'To the Chairman, Conference of Unitarian and Free
Christian Churches, Leicester.

'The Queen thanks the members of the Conference of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for their telegram.—PONSONBY.'

Subsequently the President received the following telegram and letter from the Prince of Wales:—

'O. H. M. S.

'To the President of the Conference of Unitarian and Free
Christian Churches, Leicester.

'I warmly thank for kind congratulations.—ALBERT EDWARD.'

'Marlborough House,

'Pall Mall, S.W.

'Sir Francis Knollys is desired by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to express his warm thanks to the members of the Conference of Free Churches, recently held at Leicester, for their resolution, and their kind and sympathetic congratulations to

the Princess of Wales and himself on his merciful preservation from the late attempt on his life at Brussels.

‘18th April, 1900.

‘W. Blake Odgers, Esq., LL.D., Q.C.’

After the passing of the above resolutions, Mr. CHARLES W. JONES (Liverpool) took the chair, briefly introduced the business announced in the programme, and called upon the Rev. P. H. WICKSTEED, M.A., to read his Paper:—

‘THE FEAR OF GOD AND THE SENSE OF SIN.’

Our conduct, whether impulsive or deliberate, may be regarded, I suppose, as an attempt to get ourselves into satisfactory relations with our environment.

A man who resists the importunity of impulses and desires which would urge him to secure a partial and transient adjustment of relations between himself and his environment, at the cost of a more serious and far reaching discord, is, to that extent, a man of personally well regulated life. And if, in addition to this, he cultivates such sources of satisfaction as are naturally capable of progressive enlargement rather than such as run a short course and yield a more limited satisfaction, we shall say that he shews *wisdom* in his regulation of his own life.

But *wisdom* is not *virtue*. No doubt we often say that ‘virtue is the only true wisdom,’ just as we say that ‘honesty is the best policy.’ But what we really mean is that the man who tries to be honest rather than successful often succeeds better than if he had tried to be successful rather than honest; and that the man who tries to be virtuous will often act more wisely than if he had tried to be wise. We do not mean that honesty is only another name for far seeing policy, nor that virtue is only another name for wisdom. What, then, is the element in virtue which is not included in wisdom? Clearly, we think that a virtuous man will form a wise estimate of the relative importance of his own satisfactions amongst themselves. He will not regard the transient satisfactions of ease or material pleasure above the abiding satisfactions of happy personal

relations with those amongst whom he lives, or a permanent flow of the streams of intellectual or artistic enjoyment. But, before we allow that a man is virtuous, we require that he shall look beyond the problem of the adjustment of his own immediate relations with his environment, and shall regard the relations in which other people stand to their surroundings as so far concerning him that he not only shrinks from directly injuring or thwarting another, but cannot be satisfied to arrange his own life and make his own terms with his surroundings on lines which are essentially inconsistent with the well-being of others. The virtuous man, then, regards the solution of his own problem of life as conditioned by the prohibition to traverse the lines of the general solution. He feels the necessity of establishing a harmony between his conduct and affections on the one hand, and the general conditions of human well-being on the other. He feels the pressure of his social environment, and cannot be content if he is not in ideal harmony with its demands. If, therefore, we insist that virtue is the only true wisdom, we mean to state our conviction that he who in solving his own problem fails to put himself into harmony with the conditions under which human life in general has to develop itself, will inevitably come, sooner or later, into disturbing conflict with the lives of others, which a wise man would wish to avoid. But his virtue consists in his taking direct and disinterested count of the life problems of mankind at large; his wisdom in having avoided a specious line of conduct that would have disturbed the solution of his own private life problem. Virtue, then, is something more than wisdom. The virtuous man, as such, seeks a larger, a more highly ideal, and a less selfish relation with his environment than does the wise man as such.

But *virtue* may be negative only. *Goodness* must be positive. We may call a man virtuous if he is resolved to pursue his own ends in such a way as never to violate in principle the conditions of the general solution of the problem of life. But we shall not call him a good man unless, in one way or another, he actively seeks to further others in their attempts to get into satisfactory relations with their environment. The good man will be ready to sacrifice some measure of his own satisfaction, and the pursuit of his own immediate ends,

however exalted, in order to relieve others from misery or to help them to attain to wisdom and happiness. He will seek, in his measure, with Wordsworth, 'to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, to feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous.' The actively good man, therefore, is sensitive to yet another demand of his environment, beyond those to which the negatively virtuous and the wise man responds.

But the man who is *wise*, who is *virtuous*, and who is *actively good*, is not necessarily *devout*. Preserving the same generality that we have hitherto observed, may we not say that the devout man is the man who seeks, not only to bring his life-purpose negatively and positively into relation with the life-purpose of others, but who also seeks to bring his conduct and his aspirations into harmony with the supreme under-lying and over-arching Power in whom we live and move and have our being?¹

If the Divine Being is conceived by us, however vaguely, as holiness or as love, for example, and if, independently of any reward

¹ Whenever we come to discuss any religious problem in its general bearings, we are baffled by the fact, that religion exists in extremely low and degraded types of humanity, and yet specifically characterizes the highest ranges of human experience; is, in fact, the highest utterance or experience of the highest minds. If, then, we so define religion as to include all the phenomena that historically and anthropologically we feel compelled to describe as religious, we thereby rob it completely of all the characteristics which give it significance in our own life. For instance, if we think of God, or of the gods, as personalities more or less closely resembling men, who have the power and the will to inflict upon us pains or confer upon us pleasures such as we experience from our fellow-men, then it is obvious that the desire to stand well with the gods is a motive of precisely the same order as the desire to stand well with man. And whether these pains or pleasures are to be assigned to us in this world or the next, is of no consequence. The devoutness of which we are speaking, therefore, cannot be defined simply as the desire to be in harmonious relations with the deity or deities. The significance and character of such a desire depends upon the nature of the deity as conceived by the worshipper, and the nature of the relation sought for with him.

or punishment, and without reference to the conditions under which he has made all other blessings of life, except likeness to himself, accessible to us, we are inspired by love of him, because of his holiness and love, so that our hearts are unquiet within us until they rest in conscious communion with him, then there is within us a devout life distinct from the virtuous life ; for we seek harmonious relations, not only with our material and social environment, and not only with the ideal conditions of general well-being, but also with the supreme spiritual environment, the ultimate Reality.¹

We must note, however, that devoutness may exist as an element in a comparatively low religious state. A man may have a very material conception of the Deity, and a distinct idea of concrete material advantages and disadvantages resulting from standing well or ill with him ; and yet may have, parallel to this, a genuine sense of horror at the idea of being emotionally and spiritually alienated from him, independently of all pains and penalties that may accompany such alienation. And again, this sense of harmony with the Supreme may be independent of any definite form of theism. The extremest Pantheist, or anyone who goes so far as Auguste Comte in associating the planet on which we live and the space in which we move (regarded as the seat of the abstract laws) with humanity, as the supreme object of reverence and the controlling source of the emotional life ; or anyone who, with the late Professor Clifford, recognizes the reality of 'cosmic emotion' as a factor in our highest life, will in principle realize the difference between the moral and the religious life, between goodness and devoutness, between the conditions with which we must comply to secure a satisfactory relation between man and Nature and between man and man, and the direct emotional intercourse between man and the supreme source and goal

¹ To avoid misunderstanding, it may be well to note that this devoutness of mind inevitably reacts upon our conceptions of goodness, of virtue, and of wisdom. For, if the experience supremely to be desired is the experience of communion with the Deity, then no man is truly wise who orders his life without reference to it ; and no man is in the highest sense virtuous or good unless he is negatively and positively making way for or developing this supreme experience in the lives of others. But none the less, devoutness is something other than goodness, virtue, or wisdom.

of life. But the more definitely theistic our creed, the closer and easier to define will this supreme relation appear to be.

Now, I hold that what we mean by the sense of sin is a consciousness that we have violated this supreme spiritual harmony. It may be closely or loosely connected with any sense of guilt as concerns our fellow-men, or any sense of recklessness or folly as concerns the ordering of our lives. But it is not this connection which constitutes its essential character. It is rather a sense of having disturbed, or failed to establish, a harmony between our own souls and the Supreme Being.

In studying the penitential literature of the world, we cannot fail to be impressed with the possibility of the sense of sin, entirely apart from anything that we can recognize as personal or social wickedness or failure of duty. Agonized cries rise from souls conscious of some purely ceremonial omission or commission. The horror of 'secret sins,' that is to say, not 'sins done in secret,' but ceremonial pollutions unconsciously incurred, or the thought of having done on the Sabbath day that which, only because it was the Sabbath day, was for the time unlawful, may call forth notes of anguish which echo to the depths of the soul of him who bewails some breach of the moral law, but bewails it under its spiritual aspect. Wherever, then, there is the sense of having put our lives out of tune with the Most High, there is the sense of sin.

Now, it has been the business of many religions, and of many forms of Christian religion, at once to stimulate and to assuage this sense of sin, and this, too, both in its material and in its ethical or spiritual aspects. Sometimes the whole weight of this terrible sanction has been brought to bear upon breaches of the ceremonial law. Men have been taught to assuage it by offering sacrifices to God or donations to his representatives.¹ Or at other times, they have believed that their whole lives constitute one continuous breach of the ethical precepts of the Deity, have acknowledged their own im-

¹ It would be entirely beside the purpose of this Essay to attempt to ascertain how far interested motives have actuated priesthoods in deliberately playing upon the sense of sin; for my wish is to treat this sense as a factor in the spiritual life, not in the history of civilization.

tence to restore the harmony thus violated, and have flung themselves upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ, or the forgiving and redeeming love of God. These and countless intermediate or divergent types and shades of doctrine, may be taken as illustrations of how religious systems (or the religious spirit not consciously formulated in any system) have attempted at once to stimulate and to assuage this awful sense of sin.

I think I shall hardly be mistaken in assuming that the majority of my hearers, while recognizing a certain spiritual significance in the sense of sin wherever genuine, will be agreed in holding it to be amongst the most pathetic and the most deplorable of human experiences, wherever it is completely dissociated from an ethically significant basis. That men should have suffered extremest anguish of soul in connection with deeds which had only an imagined or conventional significance is a truly terrible reflection. But while we admit that the sense of sin, unless associated with ethical feeling, is a phenomenon grievous to contemplate, we shall certainly not admit that the sense of *sin* is identical with the sense of direct or inferential *guilt*. The sense of sin may, indeed, be roused by a consciousness of moral delinquencies, or the sense of sinfulness by a consciousness of moral imperfections, and they may in their turn goad us to the most strenuous moral endeavour; but it is not in these things that they have their essence. A violation of truth, for example, or a violation of chastity may lay upon us a burden of moral guilt; but in addition to the wrong to individuals or to society, and beyond the reach of any act of atonement or compensation, is the sense of having put ourselves out of harmony with the Supreme Being, the sense of an aching wound or burn caused by no wrong done to our fellow-men (inexpressible as would be the relief, in many cases, could we be assured that no objective wrong had resulted), and medicable by no change in our relations to man.

Now, in my own youth, the deliberate cultivation of this sense of sin, or, in lack of any sense of definite sin, a sense of sinfulness, was a recognized religious duty.¹

¹ By the sense of sinfulness, as distinct from the sense of sin, I mean the belief that slackness in performance of duty, coldness in spiritual affec-

The sense of sin, or of sinfulness, was in itself a spiritual grace. And in the Christian Church there are countless indications that this has been so in many, if not in all, periods. I need only mention the place occupied in the mediæval devotions by the penitential Psalms, the tone of the additions made by the Reformers to the English Prayer Book, and the pathetic yearning which runs through the ninth and tenth services of the Liturgy best known amongst ourselves.

Now, those of my generation have been accustomed to associate the deepest impressions of their early religious life, every crisis of their spiritual education, and much of whatsoever moral grit and fibre there may be in their composition, with this sense of sin, or sinfulness, cultivated as a spiritual grace.

We look about us, and we re-examine our own spiritual consciousness, and we are aware of a change which seems to amount to a revolution. It has been said, I know not on what authority, that many years before his death, Mr. Gladstone was asked what he thought the greatest change that had taken place in his day in the religious life of England, and he answered: 'The decay of the sense of sin.' What is our attitude towards this change? I believe that most of us recognize it as a fact, and in our hearts greet it with a deep and sincere thankfulness, but also with a certain misgiving. Who can doubt or deny that in this elaborately cultivated religious depression there was something unwholesome, and that in itself it constituted both a drain upon vitality and a positive misery of dimensions not easily exaggerated? No wonder, then, that when we realize that it is disappearing, we are conscious of an acknowledged or possibly a concealed relief. And yet, and yet! Can we dissociate what is most strenuous—nay, even what is most robust and exultant in our own moral and religious life from these terrible experiences?

In order to define more closely our attitude of mind in this matter, let us glance at some of the causes that have been at work in effecting the change.

I shall make no attempt at an exhaustive enumeration. To do tion, susceptibilities to the attraction of wit, even when resisted, constituted a proper ground for a feeling of self-humiliation, constituted a failure to establish a true harmony between ourselves and God, identical with the state produced by a conscious violation of that harmony.

so would be to attempt a complete spiritual history of the last fifty years. I can merely touch upon a few of the associated movements of thought which observation and reflection seem to indicate as immediately connected with the change in question.

To begin with, there is no branch of thought or of life which has not felt the transforming touch of the theory of evolution. How far that theory is really a new one we need not discuss. It has in any case become effective in a new sense within the memory of my generation. Philosophers and poets have said and sung in every system of thought and in every tone of passion and inspiration that evil is not positive but negative, and theologians have attempted to drive their teaching home. Nevertheless, the general consciousness of mankind has been too much for the insight of the philosopher, the inspiration of the poet, and the conviction of the theologian; and evil has been continuously regarded as a positive thing just as much as good. But the doctrine of evolution has at last effected a practical modification in men's ways of looking at the matter, and we have really come, to an appreciable extent, to regard evil as the rearguard at best, and the camp following at worst, of good. Many things that our fathers looked upon with absolute and unqualified horror, wherever and whenever they appeared, we have learned to regard as natural and innocent in certain conditions and at certain stages of human progress, and undesirable rather than monstrous when they survive under conditions to which they are no longer appropriate. When pushed to optimistic extremes this doctrine is shallow and unsatisfactory to the last degree; but in its truth, as well as in its error, it has unquestionably served to modify, and in a sense to soften, our whole conception of evil, and therefore of sin. Much that we regarded as a flat violation of the divine harmony appeals to us now as a not inharmonious prelude to diviner strains. In all this there is manifest truth and insidious error; certain gain and not easily measured loss.

Again, the infusion of Pantheistic conceptions into our theism, though certainly no new thing in the Christian Church (dating as it does at least back to the influence of Greek speculations, or vaguer Oriental tendencies, upon the Hebrew tradition) has found a powerful

ally in modern science. Taking a less spiritual tone than that under which it inspired some of the noblest products of mediæval thought, it has often blunted the sharpness of the sense of a personal relation to the Supreme Being, and has therefore blunted the sense of sin. And in this growing Pantheism again, we cannot fail to note both gain and loss; an expansion of the spiritual horizon which is not only inevitable, but ennobling, together with the danger of a certain vagueness, a hireling under large and generous expressions of a poverty of spiritual concept.

Reinforcing both these tendencies, and allied with them both, is a keen sense of the fact that religious sanctions are very often superstitious survivals. Conduct which once could find its justification in real or supposed personal or social requirements, but is now no longer prescribed either by reason or by benevolence, is still enforced by the vague and terrible sanction of religion. Thus religion may distort, or positively pervert, the stress we lay upon our actions, making us strain at gnats while we swallow camels, or throwing a gratuitous blight and horror over life. Lucretius represents Epicurus as the greatest of the deliverers of mankind; because he found them cowering under the frowning brow that lowered upon them from the skies, robbing life of all its sweetness, and taught them to trample religion under foot, as it had once trampled them, and by his victory raised them to equal terms with heaven. And religion may not only depress life with its horror, but may positively oppose moral progress. We are all of us familiar with the thought of men whose moral ideals were so pure and high, and so strictly related to the actual requirements of life that they were regarded as sacrilegious rebels against the Deity by their religious contemporaries. And even in the heart of one and the same individual the growing moral life may be oppressed by religion. In Mark Twain's story, the living human relationship, the ties of gratitude, affection and loyalty which bind the white boy to the black man, are vital sources of moral conduct; and the tradition which makes the surrender of an escaped slave a social duty, has all the sanctions of religion. In the terrible struggle that goes on in the boy's mind his morality triumphs, but triumphs at the expense of setting his whole

spiritual nature into an attitude of defiant rebellion, and making him really believe that Satan's motto 'Evil, be then my good,' has become his own.

Those who are acutely sensible of this possibility of the religious sanctions being invoked in support of immoral and anti-social traditions, often suspect religion; and since they regard the sense of sin as rising out of the religious sense, they regard it too with distrust, and think of it rather as a disease to be cured than as a grace to be cultivated. Moreover, they resent the idea of this terrible experience being deliberately exploited by religion. They believe that religion attempts to bring men to a sense of sin, not because it is a right state to be in, but because it is so terrible that by way of refuge from it men will rush into any haven that is offered to them, and so give religion its chance.

Very closely connected with the influence we have last examined, is the bearing on our problem of the developed social sense which in recent times has modified so many of our ideas. A revolt against the spiritual individualism of many forms of Protestantism, and an indignant feeling that conventional respectability has been confounded with virtue, have combined with a generous social ardour to divert men's thoughts from the personal aspects of their own conduct, and from scrupulosity or severity with respect to offences that the respectable world condemns. 'Look out, not in,' they say. 'Do not trouble about your soul, or about your sins. It draws you from large emotions into petty, self-centred, scrupulosity.' Social enthusiasm and sympathy is to supersede self-discipline and self-accusation alike. On Shelley's lips this gospel reaches its highest and most convincing expression.

'Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself;
Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.
It is the dark idolatry of self
Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,
Demands that man should weep and bleed and groan;
Oh vacant expiation!—Be at rest:
The past is Death's, the future is thine own;
And love and joy can make the foulest breast
A paradise of flowers where peace might build her nest.'

Now is it not a fact that, as we pass all these tendencies in review, we are conscious of a strange mingling of feelings? On the one hand we meet the breath of a frank and wholesome life, and rejoice to escape from a morbid and self-conscious tradition; but on the other hand we are aware of the danger of confusion and superficiality; we know how easy it is to give ourselves enervating dispensations under high-sounding titles; and we were then suspect that some attempt to escape the essential discipline and evade the awful seriousness of life, has been infused into the somewhat light-hearted gospel of our day.

Can we make any advance towards disentangling these strands in the influences that have been at work in modifying or softening the old sense of sin? Can we learn to discriminate between the elements that we ought to welcome, and those that we ought to resist in the new religious tendencies?

I believe the line along which we should attack the problem leads to an attempt to define the place that *prohibition* takes in developing *opportunity*. What place does *shutting up possibilities* occupy in the process of *opening possibilities out*?

We have passed (or are passing) through an experience in our management of public affairs that ought, I think, to give us a good deal of light. When, in the earlier part of this century, thinkers and statesmen came to realise how much harm had been done by regulation of industry and other forms of restrictive legislation, some of them came to regard the problems of government and administration as being susceptible of a very easy solution on the principle of simply letting people alone and not regulating or administering at all. At that time they did not carry the principle through, but they did enough to indicate both its strength and its weakness. They conferred great benefits upon the world, but they subjected their principles to illogical limitations in some cases, and gave them disastrous application in others. But in more recent times the anarchists have advocated more consistent conduct. The political anarchist is not one who desires to abolish all *order*, but one who regards all government or *ordering* as the source not of order but of confusion, and who,

therefore, wishes to abolish that. Auguste Comte has pointed out that the use of the one word *order* by the Western nations to signify at the same time 'the issuing of a command' and 'a state of due arrangement,' shews how our consciousness declares the latter to be dependent on the former. This connection of the two senses of 'order' is exactly what the anarchist denies. He believes that if authoritative *orders* were no longer issued, *order* would ensue.

I shall not attempt to refute the anarchist, but shall simply assume that most of us think that he is wrong; but that he has got hold of a principle that we must not neglect. We believe that our object must be to secure the greatest amount of freedom possible for men; but we believe that effective freedom is measured by the range of alternatives effectively open to men, and we believe that if certain courses are forbidden to certain individuals both they and other people will have a wider range of alternatives effectively open to them than if those courses were not forbidden to them. The protection of person and property—to the limited extent to which it at present exists in our own country for instance—we believe increases our liberty, but it does so at the expense of restraining our liberty. Such restraint of liberty we accept, but only for the sake of greater liberty. We seek to minimise restraint and to keep it strictly subordinate to our purpose of enlarging opportunity; but we can not eliminate it. Its function is secondary, but essential.

So, too, in the moral and religious world. Negation and prohibition must be subordinate to fruition; but they can not be eliminated. Our moral and spiritual anarchists would have us believe that right conduct and right feeling would spontaneously assert themselves, if only Moses would break the Tables of the Law once for all, and never go up into the mountain again to have them replaced. 'I was alive once without the Law,' they say, 'and if the Law with its desolating "thou shalt not" had never been promulgated, sin would not have come to life, and I should not have died!' The spiritual, like the political and administrative anarchism, has its high value as a protest. The religion of the

priests has always had too much of prohibition in it, and the religion of the prophets has always been a *Gospel*—the announcement of glad tidings of great joy, of glorious possibilities and glorious realities.

It has opened to us a life of which we had not dreamed, and given us a joy we had not conceived. Its prohibitions are incidental, its opportunities are essential. And if I mistake not, the characteristic developments of the religious spirit in our day are entirely in this direction. The primary fact of our religion is not a sense of want, but a sense of opportunity.

‘Let him be rich and weary,’ George Herbert sang ;

‘Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.’

What does this teaching imply ? Surely, that to lie in the bosom of God is better than aught else ; but that man would never see that it was so, unless some bitterness were infused into earthly joy for the very purpose of making it unsatisfactory. Is not Tennyson’s

‘We needs must love the highest when we see it’

at once a nobler Gospel, and in far closer harmony with our own religious consciousness ? We look, I think, more and more to the deep and permanent joy and beauty of life as our normal guides into the higher region of spiritual experience, and as furnishing our normal assurance of the love of God. The sorrow and weariness of life we look upon more and more as testing and sifting out the abiding and the worthy elements of our experience from the transient and ignoble, and therefore as leading us to God, not so much through that which they take away as through that which they leave. He is the most religious man, not who most despises life, but who most sees the grandeur of its opportunities ; not who draws the sharpest contrast between the vanities of earth and the abiding glories of heaven, but to whom the breath of eternity has already transfigured the things of time, and whose guarantee for the

future is found, not in the emptiness, but in the fulness, of the present. The Greek legend tells of two ways by which the deadly charm of the Siren's song was escaped. Ulysses stopped the ears of his followers with wax, and had himself bound to the mast of his ship. The Argonauts heard the song of Orpheus, sweeter than the song of the Sirens, and so escaped their witchery.

But our spiritual anarchists protest against the idea of there being any necessity of escaping the Sirens at all. Do not lay your own nature under the ban, they say; and do not be afraid of the gods, for they are friendly, not hostile powers; and life consists in growth and in experience, not in self-thwarting and renunciation. Under the very absurd name of 'Hellenism,' as opposed to 'Hebraism,' this dream of an escape from discipline, superseding the prohibitions of morality and religion, and making life spontaneously beautiful, has a certain platonic attraction for many souls that are far too robust and wholesome to be in any practical danger from it.¹

But in point of fact, it comes into direct collision with the most fundamental condition of life; for life presents itself to us as a series of alternatives, and one alternative can only be realized by the suppression and renunciation of the other, and suppression and renunciation mean discipline, painful in a greater or smaller degree according to our dispositions and our circumstances, but in any case painful. Unless we are prepared to give up something that we want, we can never have anything that we want; and unless we are prepared to go without what we want for the minute, we shall lose what we most want for the hour.

Until we have definitely and conclusively accepted our limitations, and understood that to attain and to possess means to renounce, we have not learned the beginning of wisdom. Experiences are often

¹ I call it absurd, because true Hellenism is even further from ignoring the sterner aspects of self-discipline and self-restraint than Hebraism is from ignoring the element of spontaneous rejoicing in the gift of life. The idea that an Æschylus or an Aristotle, for instance, regarded life as mere sunshine and beauty, a pleasure garden with no snakes in the grass, an orchard in which no fruit grew that might not be plucked, is grotesque to the last degree.

mutually exclusive, and can no more occupy the same mind than two bodies can occupy the same space.

There are moments when the well regulated and virtuous man, who for years has struggled, in the main successfully, against the besetting sins of those around him, turns with a sort of reproachfulness on himself and on Providence, as though he had been defrauded of those experiences of life which in wise and deliberate scorn he has in fact rejected. What is all this save a rebellion against the fundamental condition of life, which prescribes that it shall be a choice between alternatives in which the taking of the one is the rejecting of the other? And yet it is by recognizing, not by vainly fighting against, this limitation, that we can most truly enlarge our experiences of life; for whether on the ranche, or in the study, or at the bar, or in the counting-house, or at the plough-tail, the man who 'what he lives, lives well,' by getting to the centre of life, has learned to bring its circumference under symmetrical view; whereas, he who hurries from point to point on its circumference, and fixes himself upon some excrescence, can never reach its centre. A true knowledge of life is to be gained not by bulk, but by intensity of experience; and he who has rejected unworthy alternatives and experiences, has a fuller as well as a purer knowledge of what they are, than he who has embraced them. Anselm declares that Eve's will to eat the apple and to gain knowledge of good and evil was good in itself, but evil in that it ignored the conditions of its own fulfilment. She wished to be as the gods, but wished to be so at a time when God willed it not. The very knowledge and experience she sought would have come to her as a beautiful and innocent part of a fuller life, in its due place and with its due meaning had she waited for it. But because she would not renounce she could not obtain. The allegory is as universal as it is obvious.¹

And now we may return to our immediate subject, and draw

¹ A friend to whom I once mentioned this representation of Anselm's, exclaimed at once that vivisection was the modern equivalent of the sin of the tasting the forbidden fruit. It was the attempt to secure in guilty haste what would come beautifully and duly supported and interpreted if we would wait for it.

our conclusions. Our habitual attitude must be that of working upward, not downward; forward to the light, not back upon the shadow. But to see the higher clearly, and to love it with the whole heart, is to condemn and to reject the lower; and *to have seen* the higher, and still to believe in it as the higher, though the appeal of the lower is at this moment more importunately felt, is to hear the command and the prohibition of the law, obedience to which in our hours of darkness, is the condition upon which alone we can return to hours of insight.

We apprehend the religious life, then, as growing and glorious opportunity, privilege, fruition. Our dominant idea is not the fall, but the ascent of man. But, if we are found wanting to our opportunity and our privileges, the sense of discord between what we are and what we might be and ought to be is there, though the stress falls on the glory of the life open to us, rather than on the shame of neglected opportunity.

The sense of sin, then, is no longer cultivated as an inward grace; but neither must we seek to arm ourselves against its galling sting. Very real and very terrible it still must be, if we retain our spiritual and moral sensitiveness, and do not seek to cheat ourselves; but it will act as a stimulus to seize and develop the ever-open opportunities, and to enter the ever-open door. The anguish of repentance will speak in the longing, rising sometimes to fierceness in its intensity, to meet—not only in wanton self-exposure to temptation, but in the outward course of a progressively triumphant life—the foes that formerly daunted us or cast us down, so that in our turn we may triumph over them. We shall seek for purification by meeting and bearing the consequences of our failure or our sins, however painful, and shall hope for the final quenching of the fiery sting of their memory by dwelling, not in the realms of accusing self-consciousness, but in those of frank and grateful communion of thought and deed with all that is blest and wholesome. As long as every opportunity that is offered to us means the choice between a wiser and a more foolish, or a nobler and more ignoble alternative, we shall be liable to choose the worse—not in blindness, but in weakness or passion—then, to recognize our lost opportunity, to feel the actual discord

emphasized by the ideal harmony, and to know the anguish of the sense of sin. And when this experience has been ours, we shall know the meaning of the fear of God. Not that fear which drives us in terror to divorce our actions from our affections,—not the fear of God as of the Divine policeman who is always ready to bring the terrors of the law upon us; but the fear of God, which is hardly even another aspect of the love of him. We see the beauty of holiness, we see the mark of our high calling in communion with him, we see the greatness of the opportunities of life; and this is the love of God. And we know that if, in yielding to sloth or to passion, we neglect these opportunities, and are content with the lower and the baser part, that harmony which we now feel will have its counterpart in the discord which we shall wake in the hurt and miserable sense of sin. We know that we cannot escape, though we climb to the top of Carmel, or plunge into the depths of the sea; and this is the fear of God. It is the love of God which inspires our lives; it is the fear of God which protects us in our moments of weakness, when we love the part rather than the whole, and would find a momentary and local harmony at the expense of a permanent and universal discord.

Perfect love does, indeed, cast out fear; for if we loved God perfectly, we should love him always, and sin would never tempt us. And, therefore, it is in the love of God that the formula of harmony must be sought. Even when conscious of our own sin, conscious of our self-alienation from God, and the discord that it has waked in our being, we must seek to feel the harmony above and below, that the sense of opportunity, of privilege, of glory, of God, may still dominate over the sense of failure, of exclusion, of shame, of self; that fear may be nought but an under agent of love, the sense of sin nought but an undertone in the sense of salvation.

The CHAIRMAN next called upon Mrs. Humphry Ward to read her Paper:—

GOSPEL INTERPRETATION—A FRAGMENT.

We regret that we are unable to give more than a few extracts from this able and interesting Paper, and that, owing to Mrs. Ward's intention to publish the whole later on and elsewhere, we are not privileged to quote that masterly application of her scholarly criticism to the Transfiguration story in the New Testament. Mrs. Ward said: 'In a very interesting volume of Italian essays by Signor Gaetano Negri—a most acute observer of the tendencies of thoughts in his own and other countries—I came across some reflections the other day which struck me as, if not new, at least extremely well put. Signor Negri, in a paper on "The Religious Situation," observes on the extraordinary fact that in spite of the vast progress of scientific and destructive thought in Latin countries, and in spite of the many external circumstances which might have been favourable to the creation of a new form of religious thought and action, it has never been found possible to give "true life to the smallest heresy, to the most modest schism." Of this fact—the incapacity of modern Catholic society to strike out any new path—modern Italy is, according to him, a most instructive example. Italy, by the necessities of her national life, has been led to disobey and rebel against the Pope. One would have thought that the necessary consequence would have been the foundation of a schismatic church. The re-invigoration of Catholicism is one of the most unexpected facts of our day. What is the reason for this state of things? Signor Negri replies that it is because there is not faith enough in the great Catholic countries to make a heresy. The process of scientific analysis has gone so far on the one side, the habit of taking religion on authority has sunk so deep on the other, that between them the power of religious initiation is lost. A heresy can only start from a faith. But the powers of faith that still remain in the Latin countries are so scanty that the mind of those countries shrinks in terror from any new enterprise. In the countries of the Reformation the case is wholly different. There, as Signor Negri puts it, owing entirely to the partial abandonment of authority in the sixteenth century, the world is now face to face with a transformation of Christianity

which amounts to a new religion. We see a heterodox and scientific Protestantism confronting an orthodox and traditional Protestantism. We see the new Protestantism which, in the person of its chief exponents, has pulled down the whole edifice of traditional dogmatic, and by the free expansion of the original germs of the Lutheran reform has swept away the authority to which Luther bowed no less than the authority he refused, we see this Protestantism full of faith and full of future, basing its claim not on Scripture nor on Church, but on the spiritual life of man, renewing its allegiance to Christ with a more instructed and at the same time a more child-like ardour, and finding in its combination with social enthusiasm and practical social reform the means of realising those conceptions of the Kingdom of God and its future, to which its own new study of the Master's life and work, its long years, in fact, of historical investigation and philosophical brooding, have given a new depth and a new contagion. . . . We now know that Christianity can part with all, or almost all, that once seemed vital to its life, and can still burn with the same ardent and conquering flame—that criticism has, in fact, done for it what the cauldron of legend did for the old man whose limbs were thrown into it, only to re-emerge with the vigorous strength and the fresh joy of youth. . . . Nowhere, not even at the heart of Catholicism, does Christianity remain as it was before. But over a large field of life, where people are no less religious than inclined to use their intelligence even upon what is offered to them as religious material, a totally new conception of Christianity, born of the criticism and historical work of this century, is beginning to dawn. . . . It cannot yet be superfluous for those who have come under the influence of what they regard as a “new learning,” while still clinging with ardour to the name of Christian, and with determination to their rights as members of whatever Christian body they may happen to belong to—for them to be explaining what the new ideas are, how far they are divided by the action of them from the majority of their fellow-Christians, how far, on the other hand, they still remain passionately in sympathy with the existing Christian societies. . . . The perpetual re-statement of these critical positions is necessary, and,

indeed, has its positive side. It is a contribution to Christian liberty. While the demands of orthodoxy are what they are, while in the Church of England admission to Confirmation and to Orders is made contingent upon certain ways of looking at the Christian material, which are no longer possible for large numbers of Christians; while the full burgess rights of the Divine City are made dependent upon conditions our Master never dreamt of, and which are in truth a denial of his spirit, it is perpetually necessary to be questioning as well as affirming, since it is only by sharper and sharper analysis that the Christian mind of to-day can pass on to the new combinations that await it, and bring out of its treasury things new and old—things re-born to “that new life which is the old.”

Mrs. Ward then proceeded with an application of the critical method to the Transfiguration Story, and made a very deep impression upon her hearers by the scholarly way in which she traced the origin and growth of this beautiful myth. ‘Were the reader,’ she said, ‘to meet with such a narrative outside the New Testament, he would at once ask himself what were the conditions of mind and popular belief surrounding it? What elements in it can be traced to sources already known? What was the object of its composition and its introduction into the documents where we now find it? And finally, what kind of practical idea can we make for ourselves of the way in which it arose and took its present form?’

Speaking of the new edition of St. Luke by Dr. Plummer, Mrs. Ward said: ‘It is full—or so it seems to my ignorant eyes—of an amazing learning! And yet much of it is surely a mere scholasticism—the semblance of a true knowledge—because at the root of it lies a defiance of the processes which make knowledge. How often in reading it have I thought of another exposition of the Third Gospel—have I recalled a dark lecture-room with a band of fresco about it, and on a small dais a beloved and memorable figure: the head with its noble brow and its delicate crown of white hair—the voice so scrupulous, so eager, so refined, the voice of James Martineau that we shall hear no more—the interpretation so spiritual, so just, so brave—and when all the lessons were done, the

final confession of a faith that was best fortified by knowledge, that had nothing to fear from Truth !'

THE CHAIRMAN moved, and Mr. W. BLAKE ODGERS, Q.C., seconded, a hearty vote of thanks to the readers of the Papers, which was carried with much applause. This concluded the business of the Morning Session.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

THE BUSINESS MEETING of the Conference was held on Thursday afternoon, the President, Mr. W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., LL.D., in the chair.

THE LATE DR. MARTINEAU.

THE PRESIDENT : There is one matter which appeared to the Committee so important and so urgent that it ought to take precedence of all other business on our agenda. It is a resolution concerning our great leader, Dr. Martineau.

REV. S. A. STEINTHAL (Manchester) : Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen. From the first beginning of our Conference until this moment, hardly any one of the leading speakers has been able to abstain from reference to the loss we have suffered. With such a constant presence of his spirit amongst us, it does not need many words this afternoon to recommend a resolution to this Conference commemorating Dr. Martineau's services. In the resolution we cannot tell one tithe of what we owe to him. Its wording has been carefully limited to the debt the Conference owes, but oh ! how much more does not each individual amongst us feel of the indebtedness under which he stands towards our great leader and teacher. We who are favoured to be allowed to call ourselves his pupils, who listened in the lecture room to that wondrous musical voice, know perhaps in a peculiar sense how much has been taken from us. Those of us who were able to overcome that awe which naturally impressed itself upon us as we first came under the influence of Dr. Martineau, and who ventured to go to him privately with our difficulties and our wants, we have indeed received a revelation from him of the wonderful insight which he had into the working of the human mind, and of the deep insight that he possessed of every quality that moves the soul towards high and elevated thought. And gratefully do we thank God that we were his pupils. Those who in times of sorrow and of trouble came near to Dr. Martineau, know that clear as was his intelligence, bright as was his genius, there was something that made him dearer to us than his clear mind and his bright intelligence, and that

was the tenderness of his loving heart, and we feel we have lost a friend whom it will be impossible to replace. That speech which he delivered at Leeds has been to my mind the starting point of an organization of our congregations that one could hardly have expected would have been attained. He laid out a plan that has not in detail been carried out, and it was a disappointment no doubt to him that his proposals were not more generally accepted. But now, after years have passed, anyone who traces the work that is being done in the country can see how Dr. Martineau's plan has had its weight and influence on our community, and we can feel in that bond that unites our congregations more closely together than ever they were before, we have the commanding influence of him whose loss we so deeply regret to-day. But still, however wonderful was the exercise of his intelligence at Leeds, I think that those who formed the Committee who consulted for months as to the details of his plans, must have learned to reverence the patience and the self-command which he displayed as criticism after criticism was brought up on details which he met with a kindly courtesy that none of us I am sure have forgotten. It was an example that younger men should follow, to see how greatness and modesty could be combined with such a wondrous grace. I gratefully record my recollections of those days, and I venture, therefore, in the resolution to refer to them. I shall have, when this resolution has been carried as I am sure it will be with unanimity, to propose a further resolution, and I will confine myself, therefore, simply to moving that—

The National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other non-subscribing or kindred Congregations, assembled at Leicester in its Seventh Meeting, records its grateful appreciation of the exceptional services which the Rev. J. Martineau, LL.D., S.T.D., D.D., D.C.L., and Litt.D., during his long life has rendered by deepening the faith and widening the love which the Congregations forming the Conference exist to cherish and sustain.

In an age of materialistic and utilitarian thought he has upheld an unselfish morality, and has been the unconquered Champion of Christian Theism, guarding the sure foundation on which the Universal Church is built and training men and women for the noble work to which he consecrated his lengthened years.

The Conference remembers with especial thanks the address in which at Leeds Dr. Martineau explained his plan of organization, and the patient forbearance with which he met the criticisms of its

details in Committee. Although the proposals which he framed and expounded have not been fully adopted, they have borne good fruit, and promoted closer fellowship among the Free Churches.

The Congregations represented in the Conference and the whole Christian Church on earth are poorer by Dr. Martineau's entrance into the unseen communion, and mourn their loss. But the Conference is thankful that the unnumbered tributes offered to Dr. Martineau's memory reveal a unity of spirit underlying the most varied Creeds, and show that his work has not been in vain, and make the Conference believe that in the world where all is made plain he sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied.

That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Mr. Basil Martineau and Miss Martineau, with the expression of the Conference's sincerest and most respectful sympathy.

REV. L. P. JACKS, M.A. (Birmingham): Of all the pupils and disciples of Dr. Martineau who are now engaged in the active work of the ministry, I am sure there is none who produces the Master's thought with greater faithfulness, and expounds it with greater lucidity than his successor in the pulpit of Hope Street Church, the Rev. R. A. Armstrong. None could speak to you to-day with riper knowledge of this subject, and none, I am sure, with heart fuller of personal loyalty to Dr. Martineau than he. It is, therefore, with a distinct sense of loss both to you and myself that I take his place here this afternoon. Mr. Chairman, as I look back on the years during which I have been connected with our group of churches, there is one fact especially by which I am struck, a fact to which I don't think an exact parallel could be found in any group of Christian churches, and it is this—that during all those years, and perhaps for a long time previous to that, we have all regarded Dr. Martineau as our leader, with a perfect unanimity of feeling. Not even Newman in the zenith of his influence, not even Charles or John Wesley was ever followed with greater love and devotion or ever trusted with a confidence more entire. And I think we may all admit that this fact has had a most marked and beneficial effect on the life of our churches. Lacking as we are in all the means of external organization, wanting an outward bond, and endlessly diversified in opinion, we have nevertheless been drawn together in a common union of hearts by our admission that he was the leader of us all, the man who represented all that was best in the movement to which we belong. His presence among us has been a unifying influence, and it has been exercised in a quarter of the religious world where such a unifying influence was par-

ticularly valuable. I confess that during the later years of his life, when it was too obvious that he could not be with us very much longer, I looked forward to the time when he would be taken away from us with something akin to dismay. It seemed to me that we should then lose one of the most settled but the most powerful of the cementing forces which bind us together. How much more accentuated, how much more disintegrating would our diversities of opinion be when our eyes no longer converged upon him as the common leader of us all. This feeling was at one time very strong in my mind, but I am glad to say since he has gone from us it has almost entirely passed away. I have come to believe that in our case that will happen which we have seen repeated over and over again in the history of the world; namely, that the memory and the tradition of this great personality will become even more powerful as a cementing force among us than was his living presence. And that feeling in my mind has been greatly deepened during the last few days since the Conference began. Should those words of old be spoken to us in this hall, 'Know ye that the Lord has taken away your master from your head to-day,' I venture to say that the deepest heart of every man and woman in the Conference would answer, 'Yea, we know it;' and I believe that in that simple acknowledgment of a common loss our hearts are drawn together, and we are gathered under the shadow of this great name as a single body, animated by a single heart. And that is not all. The full story of his work among us is not told when you recite all that he did by his philosophy and by his teaching. In the regard of many of us he stood not only as a great teacher, not only as a great philosopher, but as a noble and a splendid character, as an almost completed type of personality, as a man who had grown up, as far as it is possible to grow up under human limitations, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And, sir, I confess that whenever I stood in the presence of that character, and whenever afterwards I called to remembrance the image of it, there was a half-conscious feeling in my mind that a religious movement which had produced James Martineau, a set of religious influences which had ended in him, a type of doctrine which had lent itself to the formation of such a soul as he, that movement, that religion, that doctrine, must have come forth from God. And, sir, I think that is a feeling in which we all share and that it will live. There is only one other aspect of his teaching concerning which I will permit myself to say a single word. Many of us used to be puzzled, and some of us were perhaps a little repelled, by what I can only call the intensely individualistic character of Dr. Martineau's attitude towards religion. He found the perfect image of God in the perfect individual. Many of us thought that this basis of faith needed expansion, that there is a revelation of God in the perfect society as well as in the perfect man; that the basis of faith needed so defining as to

embrace the ever continuous life of humanity through the past, the present, and the future. We thought that theology, too, wanted expounding from the point of view of the social as well as the individual consciousness; but for all these we looked in vain, or nearly in vain, in the teachings of Dr. Martineau. His eye was almost exclusively fixed on the present moment of religious experience as between the soul and God, and I believe that his influence as a religious teacher would have been greatly impaired, if, indeed, it would not have been wrecked altogether, except for one remarkable circumstance, and that circumstance was his intense personal devotion to the historical Christ. And I beg you to note the effect of this. In Christ Dr. Martineau found a ground of religious interest outside the individual altogether, and by drawing a line of thought between the individual of the present moment and the universal Christ of long ago, he gave to religion a basis as broad as humanity itself. I know that there are many who have understood Dr. Martineau's individualism, but who have not been able to follow his Christology; and speaking for myself I can only say that the juxtaposition of the two influences is a mystery which I welcome from the bottom of my heart, but which I am wholly unable to explain. I beg to second the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT: I need not read the resolution because you have a copy of it, and I will ask you to pass it in silence.

REV. S. A. STEINTHAL: I beg leave to move 'That it be an instruction to the Committee to be elected to-day, to consider the advisability of commemorating our great teacher and leader, and to take the steps needful to secure the attainment of that object if a suitable plan be agreed upon.' It is only natural that a variety of plans to commemorate the memory of Dr. Martineau should have been suggested. But I don't think that it would be wise for us, in a large conference like this, to discuss schemes and plans. It is well first to have such matters thoroughly and carefully considered in committee before any active step is taken; and, therefore, I have ventured to move this resolution.

REV. L. P. JACKS, M.A., seconded, and it was agreed to.

THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

THE PRESIDENT: We will now pass on to the regular business of the meeting, and I begin by appointing Mr. Rayner Wood, J.P., and Rev. R. T. Herford, B.A., to act as scrutineers. I pass to the next motion on the agenda. It refers to the report of the Committee, which is now in our hands, and which is as follows:

THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

For the first time in the history of the Conference, your Committee presents a report to the Ministers and Delegates. It does this in accordance with a resolution passed at the special meeting held in London, May 31st, 1898. This fact is in itself of some importance, as it marks a distinct stage in the history of the Conference. The Conference, when first started, was merely a gathering for religious fellowship and discussion, to which all who would come were welcome; it had no powers, no authority. Now it is an organization on a permanent representative basis.

It may be well to briefly trace its gradual development.

The National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-Subscribing or kindred Congregations had its origin in the example set by the Unitarians of the United States of America, who had, in 1865, organized a National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches. At a Council Meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association held on January 19th, 1881, it was proposed by the Rev. P. W. Clayden, seconded by Mr. Joseph Lupton, and resolved—‘That the Executive Committee be requested to consider the possibility and desirability of holding a Unitarian Conference in England, and to ascertain the feeling of the larger Congregations, and to report to the next Meeting of the Council.’ On June 24th, 1881, at the Meeting of the Council, a Committee was formed at the instance of the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, seconded by the Rev. A. N. Blatchford, ‘to make arrangements for a meeting of ministers and laymen in some central district for religious fellowship and conference.’

The first Conference was held at Liverpool in 1882; the second at Birmingham in 1885; the third at Leeds in 1888; the fourth at London in 1891; the fifth at Manchester in 1894; the sixth at Sheffield in 1897; and the seventh will be held at Leicester from 3rd to 6th April, 1900. To these Triennial Conferences increasing interest has attached; they have had a marked effect on the well-being of our churches; and your

Committee trusts that, as the organization develops, they will have a useful and stimulating influence on the progressive religious life and thought of the nation at large.

A special meeting of the Conference was held at Nottingham on March 6th, 1890, to consider further Dr. Martineau's Organization Scheme set forth in his speech at Leeds, and resolutions were carried which have led to increased efficiency and improved organization in all our District Associations. Another special meeting was held in London on May 31st, 1898, to consider proposals for extending the influence and enlarging the scope of the work of the Conference. The following resolution was proposed by the Rev. S. A. Steinthal, seconded by Mr. John Dendy, and adopted:—‘That the Committee of the Triennial Conference having been constituted on a basis by which it represents the various Congregations and Associations which form the Conference, it is hereby resolved that the Committee be instructed to hold regular meetings to consult and, when considered advisable, to take action in matters affecting the well-being and interests of the congregations and societies which form the Conference, as by directing attention, suggesting plans, organising expressions of opinion, raising funds to carry out the foregoing objects, or summoning, if it deem it needful, a special meeting of the Conference. Further, that the Committee shall present to each Conference a full report of its proceedings and the action it has taken, for the approval or otherwise of the Conference.’

As soon as this important resolution was passed, which empowers the Conference to take definite action in certain events, your Committee felt that the time had come for the Conference to adopt a definite constitution. Owing to the manner in which the Conference had sprung up, there had never been any attempt made to define with precision the classes of persons who were entitled to attend, to speak, and to vote at a Triennial Conference.

At a meeting of the Committee held on the 22nd June, 1898, the Officers were asked to bring up a report on the past

practice, shewing who had been invited to attend and allowed to vote at former Triennial Conferences. The minutes were accordingly examined, and correspondence ensued with several gentlemen, such as the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, Rev. S. A. Steinthal and Mr. Harry Rawson, former Secretaries, the late Mr. Mathers, Secretary of the Leeds Conference, and Mr. G. W. R. Wood; and through their valuable assistance the following facts were ascertained.

Invitations to the first National Conference, held at Liverpool in April, 1882, were issued, it was found, to 'all ministers and congregations in the Unitarian Almanac, and to the leading laymen of the body, with a postscript asking for the names of ministers and others to whom it is thought desirable that circulars should be sent.' The Committee sought to put the meeting on as wide a basis as possible. It advertised it in the *Christian World*, the *Freeman*, the *Nonconformist*, and the *Independent*, offering circulars of invitation to applicants. An effort was made to find non-subscribing congregations beyond those named in the Unitarian Almanac; invitations were sent to several Congregational and other ministers; but the result was not encouraging, and the attempt to extend the Conference in this direction was therefore dropped. After the Liverpool Conference, invitations were confined to the ministers and members of congregations mentioned in the Essex Hall Year Book.

With the same object of securing a general attendance of all interested in the Conference, the first Committee decided on January 19th, 1882, 'that the various Sunday School Associations be invited to send deputations to the Conference,' and on their own authority the Secretaries extended these invitations to such societies as the Presbyterian Fund, Dr. Williams's Trustees, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, Manchester New College, the Hibbert Trust, and similar societies. This was done with the desire of attracting as large and representative a Congress as possible. But many of the societies declined or omitted to send representatives: others appointed ministers; so that the representatives added to the Conference in this way have not been numerous.

It soon became evident that the attendance would be larger than the opportunities of hospitality could meet, and in order that the official invitations to the Conference might not exceed the available hospitality, secretaries of congregations were asked the name of the minister and of one delegate from each congregation, for whom hospitality would be provided, and of other members of the congregation likely to attend. This request for the name of a delegate appears to have been the first step towards giving the Conference a distinctively representative character. Offers of hospitality were not extended to the representatives of the societies invited, nor even to ministers not in charge of congregations; but in practice a much larger measure of hospitality was afforded, and probably no one has had to provide accommodation for himself, unless by his own desire.

On April 18th, 1882, the Committee resolved 'that any questions to be submitted to the Conference should be voted upon by all persons then present.' This was the custom upon all points, including, at the earlier Conferences, the election of the Committee. A list of members suggested for election was placed in the hand of some gentleman, and was carried with slight, if any, modification, by the open vote of all persons present. But at the Conference held in London in 1891, it was felt that this informal method was unsuitable to a body whose importance and influence were now fully acknowledged; and a somewhat different procedure was adopted. It was resolved to request nominations from 'members of the Conference,' to have the names of those nominated printed on a voting-paper, and to appoint scrutineers to count the votes and report the result. Although the resolution mentions 'members of the Conference,' it made no attempt to define who those members were. But the use of such a phrase shows that the Conference had already departed from its original practice of according equal rights to every person who happened to be in the room. It is believed that both in London in 1891, and at Manchester in 1894, the right of voting, on the election of the Committee

at all events, was confined to ministers, ex-ministers, one delegate from each congregation mentioned in the Essex Hall Year Book, and one delegate each from certain selected Associations and Societies.

This arrangement, however, did not give satisfaction. The Committee was elected at the Business meeting, which was generally held at the close of the Conference, when ministers and delegates from the more distant districts had departed; and there was a natural tendency to elect gentlemen who had taken an active part in the particular Conference just closing, and to neglect those who had been less prominent. The late Mr. Mathers presented a statement, dated 7th February, 1894, to the Committee, urging that more attention should be paid to geographical considerations, that men should be elected to the Committee who would represent different parts of the country; and he suggested that the District Associations, with whom this Conference has ever been in intimate relation, should each appoint one member on the Committee. Rules were ultimately drafted and unanimously adopted at Manchester, on April 13th, 1894, which provide that a certain number of Committee-men shall be elected by the District Associations, twelve more by the ministers and delegates at the Business meeting of the Conference, and that the Committee so elected shall have power from time to time to elect not more than six other persons by co-optation.

These are the only rules which the Conference has thus far had. They were, moreover, restricted entirely to the election of the Committee and Officers: they did not purport or attempt to deal with any other matters which are usually defined by rules, and which, therefore, were still left in doubt. It did not necessarily follow that because only ministers and delegates were entitled to vote for the members of the Committee, that other persons might not speak and vote on other questions. It was also far from clear whether the word 'minister' included a former minister no longer in charge of a congregation.

Your Committee felt that these doubts should be put to rest by express provision. It has accordingly drafted a set

of rules which cover, it hopes, the whole ground, and settle each of these open questions. This draft was carefully considered and revised by your Committee at four successive meetings; it has now been printed and circulated, and will be submitted for approval at the Business meeting on April 5th. Your Committee recommends that these rules be adopted as the Rules of the National Conference.

It will be observed that rules 6-13, inclusive, of the Committee's draft, are, with very slight alteration, the existing rules of the Conference; and that rules 14 and 15 embody Mr. Steinthal's resolution passed in 1898. The list of societies other than congregations invited to send delegates has been considerably curtailed. A Roll of Churches has also been prepared to accompany the rules.

Your Committee has also carefully considered the question of finances, to which reference is also made in Mr. Steinthal's resolution. They have come to the conclusion that a subscription list will be requisite to meet the general expenses. The funds for the earlier Conferences were contributed by a few of the wealthier members of our community, to whom the Treasurer was in the habit of applying when necessity arose. In 1897 an appeal by circular was made to the congregations, and about £62 was received from 125 of our Churches. This amount was far from sufficient to meet the normal disbursements, which, it is clear, will in the future steadily increase, both as regards printing and other incidental expenditure. Besides, it will probably be necessary in future to make subventions to those smaller towns which, while anxious to invite the Conference, are deterred by the cost of the attendant hospitality, etc. A general appeal for annual subscriptions will probably engage the attention of the new Committee.

It will be in the recollection of members that, consequent upon the reading of a paper by Mr. Cogan Conway at the Sheffield Conference, a Special Committee was appointed to consider what could be done to furnish some provision for the old age of men who have devoted their lives to our ministry. This Special Committee has met several times, and has prepared a careful report with tables,

which has already been circulated. The recommendations of this Committee will be submitted for consideration on the 5th April, when resolutions in their favour will be moved by Mr. Conway and Mr. David Ainsworth. Your Committee trusts that this report may lead to some practical issue on this important question.

On January 11th, 1900, died Dr. James Martineau. A resolution gratefully recording his work and influence amongst the Free Churches will be proposed to the Conference on behalf of the Committee on April 5th. Twelve years ago, when already past the age of fourscore, Dr. Martineau addressed the Conference at Leeds in a speech which still lives in the memory of all who heard it. The particular scheme which he then proposed for the organization of our Churches ultimately failed to secure the necessary measure of support; but its spirit, the Committee believes, finds a real expression in the better organization which has since taken place in several of the District Associations, as well as in the constitution which the Conference has adopted. It will be the earnest desire of all that, while the name of Dr. Martineau is honoured and his writings are treasured by truth-seekers everywhere, the special love and reverence in which his memory is and always will be cherished in the Churches which were privileged to share more intimately in his ministry, may be shown in ever-deepening attachment to his principles, and an ever-extending service to the Church Universal.

Your Committee has to express its regret, which will be shared by the whole Conference, at the loss of three of its colleagues who have died while in office. To the late Mr. Herbert Bramley the success of the Sheffield Conference was primarily due. Mr. J. S. Mathers was for many years untiring in his work and devotion to the interests of the Conference; while the Rev. Robert Spears brought to its deliberations the fruits of a wide and ripened experience.

In conclusion, the Committee trusts that it has done something to establish the Conference on a firm and effective basis, which will enable it to develop and increase its vitality and usefulness in the future.

THE PRESIDENT: I now propose the report be received, adopted, and printed in the Report of this Conference.

MR. WM. LONG (Warrington) briefly seconded.

The report was adopted.

The Rules as submitted by the Committee were then considered *seriatim* and, after some discussion, were adopted as follows:

THE RULES OF THE CONFERENCE.

1. This Conference shall be called 'The National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-subscribing or kindred Congregations.' It shall meet at least once in every three years.

2. The following persons shall be members of the Conference and entitled to vote at all its meetings:—(a) The minister or ministers of each congregation on the roll of the Conference. (b) One delegate from each congregation and society on the roll. (c) Ministers not in charge of congregations, whose names are contained in the last Essex Hall Year Book. (d) The Principal and all Professors on the permanent staff of the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, Manchester College, Oxford, and the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester. (e) All officers and members of the Committee. (f) All past Presidents. (g) Any other person who may be elected a member by resolution passed at any Triennial Conference. Such membership shall continue for the period named in the resolution, or, if no period be named therein, for seven years.

3. The Secretary shall keep a roll or list of the congregations and societies that are entitled to send representatives to a Conference. Any congregation or society not on the roll may apply in writing for admission. Such application shall in the first place be considered by the Committee, which may, by a resolution carried by two-thirds of the members present, at once place the name of such congregation or society on the roll. If two-thirds of the members of Committee present do not vote in favour of such resolution, the Committee shall not have power to add the name of such congregation or society to the roll. But the Committee may by a simple majority pass a resolution recommending the Conference to do so.

4. Any member of the Conference, who has given at least twenty-eight days' notice in writing to the Secretary of his intention, may propose at any Triennial Conference a resolution that the name of any congregation or society be added to the roll, or that any person be elected a member of the Conference under Rule 2 (g). Any such resolution may also be proposed on behalf of the Committee, in which case it shall be sufficient if notice of it be given in or with the report of the Committee. In either case, such resolu-

tion must be passed by a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

5. The business of the Conference, subject to any directions given at any meeting of the Conference, shall be managed by the Committee and the Officers. The Committee shall decide what papers shall be read, and what resolutions shall be moved at each Triennial Conference.

6. The Committee shall consist of :—(a) Representatives chosen by District Associations representing groups of Churches. (b) Twelve persons to be elected by the members present at each Triennial Conference. (c) Not more than six persons who may be elected from time to time by co-optation by those elected under clauses *a* and *b*. The Committee shall go out of office at the conclusion of each Triennial Conference.

7. Each of the following Associations shall have the right under Rule 6 (*a*), to elect a representative to serve on the Committee. The Secretary of each Association shall forward the name of its representative to the Secretary of the Conference, at least ten days before the assembling of each Triennial Conference.

ENGLAND :—The Northumberland and Durham District Unitarian Christian Association for Missionary purposes, the Yorkshire Unitarian Union, the Provincial Assembly of Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers and Congregations of Lancashire and Cheshire, the North and East Lancashire Unitarian Mission, the Liverpool District Missionary Association, the Manchester District Association of Presbyterian and Unitarian Churches, the East Cheshire Christian Union for Missionary purposes, the North-Midland Presbyterian and Unitarian Association, the Midland Christian Union of Presbyterian, Unitarian, and other Non-Subscribing Churches, the Eastern Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, the General Baptist Assembly, the Provincial Assembly of London and the South-Eastern Counties, the London District Unitarian Society, the Southern Unitarian Association, the Western Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, the Manchester College, Oxford, the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, the Sunday School Association, the Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union. WALES :—The South Wales Unitarian Association, the South-East Wales Unitarian Society, the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen. SCOTLAND :—The Scottish Unitarian Association. IRELAND :—The Presbytery of Antrim, the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, the Synod of Munster, the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians and other Free Christians, the Ulster Unitarian Christian Association.

8. The twelve persons to be elected by the members under Rule 6 (*b*) shall be nominated in the following manner :—Every congregation and society on the roll shall be invited to nominate some one person, who need

not be a member of the congregation or society nominating, to serve on the Committee. The expiring Committee may also, if it thinks fit, nominate not more than six persons—not being members of the expiring Committee—to serve on the new Committee. All such nominations must be in the hands of the Secretary at least seven days before the assembling of the Conference. He shall then prepare a list of the persons nominated, showing by whom each person is nominated, and shall cause the same to be printed and delivered to each member as soon as possible after his arrival in the town in which the Conference is held. No one whose name does not appear on such list shall be elected on the Committee under Rule 6 (*b*), except by a unanimous vote of the members present.

9. From the persons nominated in accordance with Rule 8, twelve shall be elected in the following manner:—The President or other Chairman of the meeting shall appoint Scrutineers. Each member shall make, on his copy of the list of persons nominated, a cross opposite the names of the persons for whom he intends to vote. The Scrutineers, if members, may vote. No member may vote for more than twelve persons to serve on the Committee. Each member shall then sign his list with his name and address, and hand it as his voting paper to the Scrutineers. If any member who has been present during any portion of the Conference is compelled to leave before the Business Meeting, he may lodge his voting paper, duly signed, with the Secretary, enclosed in a sealed envelope addressed ‘To the Scrutineers’; and it shall be the duty of the Secretary to hand the same to the Scrutineers on behalf of such member.

10. The Scrutineers shall reject every voting paper which is not signed by a member, every voting paper on which more than twelve names (of those nominated for Committee) are marked, and every voting paper which is in their opinion unintelligible or equivocal. They shall then count the votes and the Chairman shall announce the result to the meeting. The voting papers shall then be destroyed by the Secretary.

11. The Officers of the Conference shall be a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer, one or more Honorary Secretaries, and two Auditors. The Officers shall be elected by the members present at each Triennial Conference, and shall hold office till the conclusion of the next Triennial Conference. The Officers shall be *ex officio* members of the Committee.

12. It shall be the duty of the expiring Committee to submit to each Triennial Conference the names of persons whom it deems qualified, and whom it has ascertained to be willing, to serve as Officers of the Conference. Any member present at any Triennial Conference may propose any other person for any office, and the vote shall be taken at the Business Meeting by show of hands, unless an election by voting papers be demanded,

in which case the Officers shall be elected in the same manner as the Committee.

13. The Committee may fill up any vacancy which may occur on the Committee or in any office through death, absence, resignation, or from any other cause.

14. The Committee shall hold regular meetings to consult, and when considered advisable to take action, on matters affecting the well-being and interests of the congregations and societies on the roll of the Conference, as by directing attention, suggesting plans, organizing expressions of opinion, raising funds to carry out the foregoing objects, or summoning, if it deem it needful, a special meeting of the Conference.

15. At each Triennial Conference the Committee shall present to the members a full report of its proceedings and of the action which it has taken, for the approval or otherwise of the Conference. A copy of such report shall be forwarded ten days at least before the assembling of each Triennial Conference to every member whose name and address is then known to the Secretary. It shall state the general nature of any resolution (other than formal or usual business) which is to be proposed on behalf of the Committee at the approaching Conference.

16. These rules may be varied or repealed, or new rules made, at any Triennial Conference by a resolution passed by a majority consisting of not less than two-thirds of those present and voting. Unless such resolution is to be moved on behalf of the Committee, notice of the proposed alteration or addition must be sent to the Secretary twenty-eight days at least before the assembling of the Conference. In either case, notice of the resolution must be given in or with the report of the Committee. Notice of any other resolution proposed to be moved at the Business Meeting must reach the Secretary two days at least before the assembling of each Conference.

THE CHURCH ROLL

Was adopted as follows :

ROLL OF THE CHURCHES.

Grouped under District Societies and Provincial Assemblies.

ENGLAND.

1. *East Cheshire Christian Union.*

Allostock	Gee Cross	Mossley
Ashton-under-Lyne	Glossop	Mottram
Buxton	Hyde—Flowery Field	Nantwich
Congleton	„ Boston Mills	Newcastle-under-Lyme
Dean Row	Knutsford	Stalybridge
Denton	Longton	Stockport
Dukinfield	Macclesfield	Styal

2. *Eastern Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.*

Bedfield	Framlingham	Long Sutton
Braintree	Halstead	Norwich
Bury St. Edmunds	Hapton	Yarmouth
Diss	Ipswich	
Filby	King's Lynn	

3. *Liverpool District Missionary Association.*

Birkenhead	Liscard	Liverpool—
Bootle	Liverpool—	Hamilton Road
Chester	Ullet Road	Mill Street
Crewe	Hope Street	Southport
Croft	Toxteth Park	Warrington
Gateacre	Bond Street	

4. *London District Unitarian Society.*

Bermondsey	Kentish Town	Stepney Green
Brixton	Kilburn	Stratford
Deptford	Lewisham	Wandsworth
Forest Gate	Little Portland Street	Wood Green
Hackney	Mansford Street	Bell Street
Hampstead	Newington Green	George's Row
Highgate	Peckham	Limehouse Mission
Islington	Plumstead	Rhyl Street
Kensington	Stamford Street	

5. *Manchester District Association of Presbyterian and Unitarian Churches.*

Altrincham	Manchester—	Manchester—
Hale	Gorton	Upper Brook Street
Heaton Moor	Longsight	Urmston
Manchester—	Moss Side	Hulme Mission
Blackley	Oldham Road	Willert Street
Bradford	Pendleton	Middleton
Chorlton-cum-Hardy	Platt	Monton
Cross Street	Sale	Oldham
Failsworth	Strangeways	Swinton

6. *Midland Christian Union of Presbyterian, Unitarian, and other Non-subscribing Churches.*

Alcester	Coseley	Stourbridge
Atherstone	Coventry	Stratford-on-Avon
Banbury	Cradley	Tamworth
Birmingham—	Dudley	Walsall
Church of Messiah	Evesham	Warwick
Old Meeting	Kidderminster	West Bromwich
Newhall Hill	Kingswood	Whitchurch
Small Heath	Lye	Wolverhampton
Hurst Street	Oldbury	
Fazeley Street	Shrewsbury	

7. *North and East Lancashire Unitarian Mission.*

Accrington	Chorley	Park Lane
Ainsworth	Chowbent	Preston
Astley	Colne	Rawtenstall
Blackpool—Banks St.	Heywood	Rivington
„ Sth. Shore	Hindley	Rochdale
Bolton—Bank Street	Horwich	Stand
„ Unity Church	Lancaster	Todmorden
Burnley	Leigh	Walmsley
Bury—Bank Street	Newchurch	
„ Chesham	Padiham	

8. *North-Midland Presbyterian and Unitarian Association.*

Bedford	Chesterfield	Great Hucklow
Belper	Derby	Hinckley
Boston	Flagg	Ilkeston
Bradwell	Gainsborough	Kirkstead

Leicester—	Loughborough	Nottingham—
Great Meeting	Mansfield	High Pavement
Narborough Road	Newark	Christ Church
Lincoln	Northampton	Hyson Green

9. *Northumberland and Durham Unitarian Association.*

Barnard Castle	Darlington	South Shields
Byker	Gateshead	Stockton
Carlisle	Middlesbrough	Sunderland
Choppington	Newcastle-on-Tyne	

10. *Southern Unitarian Association.*

Bournemouth	Portsmouth—	Southampton
Chichester	High Street	Wareham
Newport, Isle of Wight	St. Thomas' Street	Weymouth
Poole	Ringwood	

11. *Western Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.*

Bath	Crewkerne	Plymouth
Bridgwater	Cullompton	Rushall
Bridport	Devonport	Shepton Mallet
Bristol—Lewin's Mead	Exeter	Sidmouth
„ Montague St.	Frenchay	Taunton
Cheltenham	Gloucester	Tavistock
Cirencester	Ilminster	Torquay
Clifton	Moreton Hampstead—	Trowbridge
Colyton	Cross Street	Yeovil
Crediton	Fore Street	

12. *Yorkshire Unitarian Union.*

Bradford	Leeds—Mill Hill	Selby
Dewsbury	„ Hunslet	Sheffield—
Doncaster	„ Holbeck	Upper Chapel
Elland	Lydgate	Upperthorpe
Fulwood	Malton	Stannington
Halifax	Pepperhill	Thorne
Huddersfield	Pudsey	Wakefield
Hull	Rotherham	Whitby
Idle	Scarborough	York

13. *London and S.E. Counties Provincial Assembly.*

Bessell's Green	Dover	Northiam
Billingshurst	Eastbourne	Oxford
Brighton	Godalming	Ramsgate
Canterbury	Guildford	Reading
Chatham	Hastings	Richmond
Chelmsford	Horsham	Saffron Walden
Croydon	Lewes	Southend
„ Dennett Hall	Maidstone	Tenterden
Deal	Margate	Tunbridge Wells
Ditchling	Newbury	Walthamstow

[This Assembly also includes all the Churches in the London District.]

14. *Provincial Assembly of Presbyterian and Unitarian Ministers and Congregations of Lancashire and Cheshire.*

The Churches in the East Cheshire Union, the Manchester District Association, and the North and East Lancashire Mission are included in this Assembly, and also the Church at KENDAL.

WALES.

15. *South Wales Unitarian Association.*

Aberdare—	Ciliau	Llwynrhydowen
Old Meeting	Clydach Vale	Pantdefaid
Allt-y-placa	Cribin	Panteg
Caeronen	Cwmbach	Pentre
Capel-y-Bryn	Dowlais	Rhydygwin
Capel-y-Fadfa	Gellionen	Rhydyppark
Capel-y-Groes	Lampeter	Sychbant
Cefn Coed	Llandyssul	Trebanos

16. *South-East Wales Unitarian Society.*

Aberdare—	Carmarthen	Swansea
Highland Place	Merthyr Tydfil	Wick
Bridgend	Nottage	
Cardiff	Pontypridd	

SCOTLAND.

17. *Scottish Unitarian Association.*

Aberdeen	Glasgow—	Kilmarnock
Dundee	St. Vincent Street	Kirkcaldy
Edinburgh	South St. Mungo St.	Paisley

IRELAND.

18. *Presbytery of Antrim.*

Antrim	Clough	Larne
Ballyclare	Downpatrick	Newtownards
Belfast—First	Greyabbey	
„ York Street	Holywood	

19. *Remonstrant Synod of Ulster.*

Ballee	Comber	Moirra
Ballycarry	Crumlin	Newry
Ballyhemlin	Dromore	Rademon
Ballymena	Dunmurry	Ralloo
Ballymoney	Glenarm	Templepatrick
Banbridge	Killinchy	Warrenpoint
Cairncastle	Limavady	

20. *Synod of Munster.*

Clonmel	Cork	Dublin
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Churches not connected with any Presbytery.

Belfast—All Souls'	Carrickfergus	Mountpottinger
„ Stanhope St.	Moneyrea	Ravara

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

THE PRESIDENT: In the absence of our Treasurer, I have been asked to present his report. You have passed resolutions asking us to do much more than the ordinary work of the Committee of Conference. That being so, it is first necessary that we should have an income. At present we have got on very well by putting the expenses of the various Triennial Conferences on to the towns good enough to invite us. When the treasurer was considerably out of pocket he made a whip up among his private friends. But that was thought a bad plan. An appeal was made three or four years ago to the churches, and each church was asked to send a contribution. We got an average of under ten shillings a church! We have met in most of our largest towns, and most generously we have been entertained; but I should be sorry if this Conference should only visit our big and important centres. We must, by and by, visit places where the congregations are not so well off—more outlying and isolated places. We shall have in future, occasionally at all events, to contribute to the expenses of the Conference. It is not right to demand that a congregation which perhaps has as much as it can do to make both ends meet, shall entertain us with princely generosity. A conference of this kind costs £300, or more

than that, if done in the way Leicester has done it; but if we visited smaller places we should be willing to accept hospitality of a less princely kind, and I think also the Conference will have to contribute something towards the cost. It is a question whether we must have an annual subscription list; but our expenses are increasing rapidly, and we must have more money. The Treasurer sent out an appeal at the beginning of this year. He wanted £300, and he got £210. There is the odd £90 we want made up. There have been hitherto Reports of this Conference; originally they were in book form, giving the papers and the discussions. That was found to be expensive, and accordingly we asked the '*Inquirer*' newspaper to include a report for us. But it was not in a form to keep for future reference. The Committee, believing that the remaining £90 will be given, have decided to issue a proper Report again in book form of the proceedings of the Conference. To do that and pay the expenses of the officers will require the full sum of £300.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

THE PRESIDENT: It is my privilege and pleasure to propose to you the name of my successor, a gentleman whom the Committee have decided to recommend to you as the president for the next three years. They have decided to ask you to elect to the office of President, the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A. I am proud to resign my office to so good a man. He has spent his whole life in doing good, and in doing good for others. I propose that the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A., be elected President of this Conference.

REV. AMBROSE BLATCHFORD, B.A. (Bristol): It is a pleasure and a privilege to second the election of one whom we know so well, and love so dearly, and trust so truly, as our good friend Estlin Carpenter. You will join with me in wishing him a happy and most successful presidency. There is something peculiarly fitting in that he who has helped so efficiently in the training of our future ministers should be asked to preside over an assembly where he will be privileged to see the success of his efforts; because I think one of the most hopeful signs of this Conference is the fact that there are gathered round about us at the present time so many young and earnest ministers who are pressing on to take up the standard that our leaders have laid down in honour, and to whom their seniors are looking for help and support.

The resolution was carried.

THE REV. J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A.: I thank you with all my heart for the confidence with which you entrust this office—the most honourable in our whole group of churches—to my care. You have already laid upon the Committee of the Conference a heavy burden during the next three years; but I rejoice that there will be on that body men who will supplement my

deficiency, men who will sustain whatever energy I may be able to bring to your service, and men whose wisdom and devotion to our common cause are assuredly no whit less than mine. I thank you with all my heart for the service which you have thus laid upon me.

The retiring President then handed over to his successor a 'part of the archives' of the Conference, in the shape of certain books and documents committed to his keeping.

THE REV. W. H. DRUMMOND, B.A. (Warrington) proposed that Messrs. J. R. Beard, J.P., and W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., be Vice-Presidents of the Conference.—Carried.

THANKS TO THE LEICESTER COMMITTEE.

REV. W. G. TARRANT, B.A. (Wandsworth): I have to propose that a cordial vote of thanks be given to the Leicester Committee for their excellent arrangements and hospitality. I hope our Leicester friends will take this as meaning sincere and deep thankfulness. Those of us who have had any experience of the preparations for a Conference, know that the labours have to begin a long time ahead and be carried on with onerous industry. It has been my good fortune to be the guest of one not belonging to any of our churches, but I am sure he belongs to a kindred church. I heartily congratulate our Leicester friends on the success with which they have brought all their labours to a triumphant issue, and in my resolution I would include our hosts throughout the town who have been so kind as to entertain us.

REV. A. N. BLATCHFORD, B.A.: I briefly but heartily second the motion. Leicester has certainly set a worthy example for places that shall yet come forward to entertain the Conference. We think of the kindly feeling that our orthodox Nonconformist friends have shown to us in this town. (A voice: And church.) Yes, our gratitude is due also to the Church of England, and it is most befitting that I should give expression also from this platform to our deep indebtedness to the Mayor for his kindness.

THE PRESIDENT: I should like to say how much I feel the Conference is indebted to our friends in Leicester, and especially to the Mayor for the very kind way in which he received us last night. We are also much indebted to Miss Gittins and to Mr. Harry Cooper, the Local Hon. Secretaries, for the indefatigable way in which they have worked.

The resolution having been carried with acclamation,

MR. E. CLEPHAN, J.P. acknowledged. He said: It was with great fear and trembling that the older ones amongst us undertook to entertain the Conference; but the younger members had the advantage of youth and enthusiasm, and they do not see any difficulties; and when they took up the idea with perseverance and enthusiasm, and the older ones subscribed

the money, the thing was fairly launched. I would like publicly from this place to acknowledge the great obligation we have been under both to members of the Church of England and to the Nonconformist body for their very kind help. And I should like to say how admirably our two secretaries have done their work. Morning, noon, and night, no exertion has been too great for them, and I don't think there has been a single hitch in the whole business from the beginning to the end.

THE MINISTERS' SUPERANNUATION QUESTION.

Mr. J. COGAN CONWAY (Ringwood) presented the report of the special Committee on Ministers' Superannuation, which was as follows :

At the close of the discussion on Mr. J. Cogan Conway's paper, at the Sheffield Conference in 1897, the following resolution was passed :—

'That this Conference recommends that earnest attempts should be made by congregations and individuals to increase their subscriptions to the Ministers' Benevolent Society, and that a Committee be appointed to confer with the Directors of the Ministers' Benevolent Society, and take such action in relation to the superannuation of our Ministers as they consider desirable ; and that the Committee consist of Messrs. John Harwood, David Martineau, Frederic Nettlefold, David Ainsworth, Edwin Lawrence, M.P., J. Cogan Conway, W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., Frank Taylor, Charles Fenton, and such gentlemen as they may invite to join their number.'

Some of these gentlemen subsequently did not see their way to serve on this Committee. The remainder now present to the Conference the following

REPORT.

Your Committee have held several meetings, and considered many schemes and suggestions. At an early stage of their deliberations they had the benefit of a consultation with some of the officials and managers of the Ministers' Benevolent Society, who afforded them valuable assistance. Your Committee desire to say at once, that they have from the first been anxious that no scheme which emanates from them should in any way clash with the useful work done by this society ; an anxiety which they are sure will be shared by the ministers and delegates. But, at the same time, your Committee feel that the needs of the case will not be met merely by

increasing the funds and widening the scope of the operations of this society. For it is a Benevolent Society : and a benevolent society, as such, confers no rights on its members. It gives to those whom it seeks to benefit no clear and indisputable claim to any fixed annuity. And this your Committee feel is an essential part of any scheme which is to command the co-operation of so independent and self-reliant a body of men as our ministers. The desire of your Committee (which your Committee feel sure is also the desire of our ministers) is to help those gentlemen to help themselves—to call on them to contribute as much as each can to the necessary outlay—giving them in return an absolute right to a certain benefit at a certain date.

Your Committee accordingly conferred with eminent actuaries, connected with three of our best-known Life Assurance societies ; and eventually, after rejecting many more ambitious schemes, they have decided to recommend to the National Conference the following scheme :—

The Equitable Life Assurance Society is willing to insure any of our ministers on the following terms : The minister must pay premiums according to the Tables in the Schedule to this Report, from the commencement of the insurance till he attains the age of 65. Then all payments from him will cease, and instead he will receive an annuity of £52 a year till his death, and on his death his representatives will receive £250. If he dies under the age of 65, his representatives will receive the £250 ; but, in this case, the society will pay no annuity. The insured will have, of course, an absolute right to these benefits, provided he pays his premiums regularly. And a Fund must be raised to assist him to pay these premiums, so long as he remains a minister of a congregation on the roll of the Conference. In those cases in which the premium did not exceed £20, the Committee propose that half the premium should be paid by the minister, and half out of the income of the fund. But where the premium exceeded £20, the fund would pay £10 and no more, leaving the minister to pay the remainder. This would encourage early insurance.

Your Committee estimate that, for this purpose, either a sum of

£20,000 or an assured income of £600 is necessary. Should the scheme prove a success, and its operations become more extensive, more capital may become necessary; but, for the first 10 or 15 years, they believe that the figures named would be adequate. And they believe that with so desirable an object in view as the provision of an annuity, however small, for our aged ministers, there would be no insuperable difficulty in raising the necessary funds.

It would be easy, should the promises of donations justify such a step, to re-arrange the figures so as to secure to every minister insuring under this scheme an annuity of £104 after the age of 65, instead of the meagre minimum of £52 a year. A Table of Premiums on the basis of £104 a year is also added. If this were adopted, it would probably be necessary for the trustees of the fund to contribute, in some cases, to the extent of £15 a year. But for the present, your Committee are content to submit to the Conference the more modest plan suggested above, in the earnest hope that it may be approved and adopted; as they feel certain that some scheme of the kind is urgently needed among our churches.

TABLE OF ANNUAL PREMIUMS.

Annual Premiums to secure the payment of £250, with Profits at death, and an Annuity of £52 a year from the age of 65 till death. Premiums and Profits to cease at 65.				Annual Premiums to secure the payment of £250 at death and an Annuity of £52 per annum from the age of 65 until death. Premium to cease at 65.			
Age next birthday.	£	s.	d.	Age next birthday.	£	s.	d.
25	9	8	1	25	8	14	5
30	11	7	3	30	10	13	0
35	14	1	7	35	13	5	8
40	17	19	0	40	17	1	3
45	24	1	6	45	22	18	9
50	34	11	10	50	32	18	9

Annual Premiums to secure the payment of £250 with Profits at death, and an Annuity of £104 per annum from the age of 65 until death. Premiums and Profits to cease at 65.				Annual Premiums to secure the payment of £250 at death, and an Annuity of £104 per annum from the age of 65 until death. Premiums to cease at 65. Without Profits.			
Age next birthday.	£	s.	d.	Age next birthday.	£	s.	d.
25	13	6	8	25	12	12	11
30	16	7	7	30	15	13	4
35	20	12	7	35	19	16	9
40	26	15	5	40	25	17	8
45	36	10	1	45	35	7	4
50	53	8	0	50	51	14	8

MR. CONWAY, in moving the adoption of the report, said: I need not argue the necessity of some such fund for the provision of a retiring allowance for ministers whose period of active service is ended by age. We are all agreed upon that. The average salaries of our ministers unhappily are such that they are not able to save for old age, although they serve the church well and faithfully during many years. Therefore, it is generally felt among us that the church at large ought to make provision for the declining years of those who have devoted their lives to its service. This provision should be in no sense charity. Rather it should be deferred pay, a part of the hire of which the labourer is worthy. Of course, the question arises, is there such provision made at present? Well, there is some. There is in Lancashire and Cheshire a fund called the Widows' Fund, which undertakes a great part of this duty, in those two counties; but that is entirely a private society, and it does not embrace the whole of the ministers in those two counties. There is also the Ministers' Benevolent Society, which is a very admirable society. It does a noble work, but in my humble opinion it is not sufficient for the need that exists, because, admirably as it is managed, it does not give a right to any minister. The Committee appointed at Sheffield was instructed to confer with the ministers of the Benevolent Society. We did so, and we should be only too glad if it could see its way to take up this scheme and carry it out. But up to the present time we have not been able to come to any arrangement, and the only suggestion we can make is that the Church at large should assist in the insurance of the ministers and pay part of the premiums. The way in which this could be done would be to raise a fund for the purpose. We must proceed on a sound business basis. The Committee saw that it would be too risky to attempt to set up a new Insurance Company of our own. The actuarial knowledge wanted is lacking, and the amount of capital required would be too large; the scope would be too small. Such an insurance as we desire in order to be satisfactory must be safe, and, therefore, the only plan was to go to some sound insurance office, and endeavour to arrange terms with them. The tables attached to the report end at the age of fifty years, but only for convenience' sake. If any minister over fifty wishes to insure he can do so. The only thing is that the premium will be higher, and the scheme proposes that the fund will only pay £10 a year. There is no suggestion in the scheme as to compulsory retirement. If a minister who insures under this scheme has attained the age of sixty-five he is entitled to this annuity, and if he is still vigorous and able to go on with his work there is nothing to prevent him doing so. In order to secure safety and make it worth while for the insurance office to take it up, the premiums necessarily could not be put at a low figure. They were put upon a business basis, and they are figures of arithmetic, not of benevolence. The Equitable is a mutual office, and so

long as you insure, as we hope everybody will do, under the table that gives profits, you will get the benefits of the profits, because they go to the people who insure. The income that is asked for here, £600 a year, is the very least that will be necessary if the scheme is carried out; and if it is at all taken up by ministers that amount will not be enough. The scheme will require large and generous financial support, and upon the amount of support so received will depend its success and the extent of its operations. I move the adoption of the report; but I beg the Conference to remember that if it is adopted it will pledge the Conference to raise the money for carrying out the scheme.

MR. DAVID MARTINEAU (London), in seconding the adoption of the report said: We do not do our duty by our ministers unless we enable them to make some provision for their families and themselves in their old age. This scheme has been sent round to the ministers for their consideration and criticism, and it has been on the whole favourably received. We believe it is workable and practicable, but we can none of us say it is a thoroughly satisfactory scheme. There are several things which it fails to do, and it will be for the new Committee to try to carry the thing forward a stage, and to see whether it cannot be improved upon. But all that will depend upon the amount of support which is shown by the Conference. I will touch upon a few of the objections which have been raised. The first, which is a very important one, is that the scheme makes no provision for helping the older men in our ministry. To that I must answer that it is necessarily so, as insurance rates late in life are prohibitively high, and, on the other hand, most men at forty have already made their own insurance, and would not wish to join a new scheme. We can hardly expect men who are past the prime of life, and have already paid their money to the Ministers' Benevolent Society, to take up the new scheme. Then I come to another objection; and that is that some ministers, who I am sorry to say have very small and inadequate stipends, could not afford to join us. A suggestion was made by one gentlemen that we should have a sliding scale of payments graduated on income. That is an idea worth considering. But this is not a benevolent society. It is intended that the men subscribing to it shall have certain rights which must be clearly defined, and although that idea may be well worth considering, it must largely depend upon the fund at the disposal of the directors. I may say further that if funds sufficiently ample could be raised, as has been done by the Church Superannuation Assurance Society, great improvements might be made. The Congregationalists, and Baptists, and I think some others, have fallen back upon the same plan as this. The only difference between the Church of England and the other bodies is that the Church of England, being such a very large body, with such immense ramifications, has been able to start an insurance society of its own, and

has worked up and down the country with such energy during the last eight or ten years, that it has actually now an income of £40,000 a year. I cannot help thinking that by diligent working and picking up the small sums from all our congregations we might in time raise £2,000 a year. If we could do anything of this sort the directors would then be able to manage the thing in a handsome and liberal way. We should be able to raise the amount of the annuity from £52 to £104. In the scheme before us there is no interference between ministers and their people. That was one of the objections taken. Some seemed to think our scheme would compel a man to retire at sixty-five, but it does nothing of the sort. If a man is doing his duty well and actively, as many of our ministers are, why should he not go on and draw his pension as well as his salary? Another thing was said, and that was—it was put forward very strongly—that insurance for a bare annuity would be done cheaper than with the additional £250 at death. It would, but what young man on entering upon the ministry at twenty-four or twenty-five years of age would dream of paying only for an annuity at sixty-five. I apprehend that no insurance at all would be made. The terms between the minister insuring and the society assisting him would have to be very clearly and properly drawn as a legal document, so as to show exactly in every case which might happen what would be the result if a man wishes to retire from the ministry, or is going into business, or from any cause ceases to be a minister, and therefore ceases to become entitled to the benefit of the fund—what in such a case is to become of the money that he has paid and that the Society has also paid? No doubt a surrender value will have to be arranged. I strongly recommend, as Mr. Conway did, that a man should go for the higher rate of insurance so as to gain a bonus. My experience is that if a man insures at twenty-five—which I hope would be the time most of our men would insure—and goes on paying up to sixty-five for £250, the probability is that his bonus would be much more than £250 in addition. That gives him more money than if he had saved the same amount annually and invested it to the best advantage. Besides, there is his £250 safe should he die the following year. Now I come to the amount of the fund that will be required to work the scheme. I went through the Year Book and struck out the names of all the men who I thought belonged to the Widows' Fund. I also considered that the Irish Fund would probably in the same way debar our Irish friends, and so I came to this:—There are 364 ministers on the roll in the Year Book. I deducted those belonging to the Widow's Fund, say 87; I suppose there are belonging to the Irish Fund 40; and those over forty years of age who probably would not insure, I put at 180. Those three figures brought the 364 on the roll down to 57, so that I begin with the idea that we shall have to provide for 57 men who are likely to insure at once; we might take them at an average of 35 years. That

would necessitate £401 7s. 6d. a year to be found by the Society in order that they might insure for the annuity with profits. Then we have the young men who are coming on from the colleges every year and joining the ministry. I estimate they will probably be about six a year, at an average age of twenty-five years. At the end of 10 years we should have 60 of those men, and be paying £4 14s. 1d. each for them, amounting to £282 5s.; so that altogether at the end of 10 years we should have to find £683 12s. 6d. per annum. Of course if we could raise £600 a year to begin with, the sum that is mentioned in the report, that would be more than we should want the first year, and it would accumulate. The amount of accumulation would decrease every year; but I apprehend that the amount would be enough to carry us on till the tenth year, and if we found before the expiration of that time the scheme was likely to be a success, we should have to come before the Unitarian body and get them to find us a much larger sum. Supposing all our ministers some years hence were insured by this fund,—the whole 364, which probably by that time would have gone up to 400—and taking them at an average age of 25, the amount required would be nearly £1,900 a year, and I should expect that the Unitarian body would in such an event cheerfully find the money. If this resolution is passed and a committee is appointed to carry it through, we shall have to go to some very careful actuary, place the matter in his hands, and bring it as close to the right figures as we can. I have worked a great deal of mine out by myself, though I am not an actuary, and the probability is that I have a little overdone the expenses.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the best way to discuss this difficult question will be that now anybody who is not quite clear in his mind about any particular point in the scheme should ask questions, which can be replied to.

This suggestion being acted upon, the question was asked from the body of the hall if it was intended that those insuring under the scheme should pass a medical examination.

THE PRESIDENT: I believe they will have to.

Replying to the question whether there were any intermediate premiums, or whether the ages went from 25 to 30 and so on, the President said there was a long table of intermediate premiums.

Another speaker asked if it was intended that a minister who ceased to be for a time the minister of a congregation on the roll of the Conference, but who wished to remain in the ministry and was seeking another charge, should be excluded from the assistance of the Society during that period.

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, the Society would not assist to pay the premium, if he ceased to be a minister; he would pay it himself. But if he was only temporarily out of a charge, it would have no effect on the arrangement.

Replying to the question 'May profits be taken in reduction of premiums?' The President said that they had not inquired into that.

QUESTION: What, if any, control would this Conference, or the representatives of this Conference, have over the terms of insurance? Would it rest entirely with the Insurance Society itself?

MR. CONWAY: I take it, the managers or trustees would have a voice in that as well as the Insurance office.

The question having been asked whether it would be considered dishonorable for a man who was attached to the Widows' Fund to claim the advantages also of this scheme,

MR. MARTINEAU said he had reckoned such a man would not wish to join.

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, any man who is the minister of a congregation on the roll of the Conference would have the right to come in under this scheme if he wished.

REV. J. C. STREET (Shrewsbury), on behalf of the Ministers' Benevolent Society, said: I would make a few remarks, and first I may say that the communications which have passed between our friends on the part of the Conference and the directors of the Benevolent Society have been of the most friendly character. The Ministers' Benevolent Society have been asked if they could incorporate in their plan this proposal, and the answer given is, that they cannot. The Ministers' Benevolent Society is from its very nature a *benevolent* society. It can confer no rights. The directors are not competent to take charge of any funds which are contributed to confer rights. We most earnestly desire to say that any practical scheme, which would apply to ministers who are not otherwise provided for, would secure our hearty co-operation. But these facts should be borne well in mind. There are some of our younger ministers who will become embarrassed in a way by domestic ties, and who will find great difficulty in providing a constant payment of from £5 to £10 per year; and I am asked to call attention to this fact, that there are now some 350 ministers on our roll; but not a few are ministers who have retired from active work, not a few are sufficiently provided for by their private means, 87 have made provision through the Widows' Fund,—the Irishmen are not included in any funds that are spoken of here to-day—but of the remaining number, probably 178 are already members of the Ministers' Benevolent Society. There is, therefore, but a small body unprovided for by the schemes already in existence. Our scheme simply requires the payment of a guinea a year for 20 years, and all obligation ceases then. If a man should die before he has paid the £21, if he should die after he has paid a guinea, his widow gets the benefit, and the benefits are of a very substantial character. They may be from £40 to £80, and sometimes a £100 a year, and I am

instructed to say that there never has been a case in the history of the Society, when any member or his survivors have been in need, that the need has not been ministered unto. In every case of need there is help. If a man fails in health he is helped during the time of his illness; if a man breaks down altogether he is helped as long as he lives; and if he dies, having received help to the time of his death, his widow and his orphans are also capable of receiving help from this Society. I want you, therefore, to see that though the word Benevolent is applied—perhaps not more than it is in other cases—there is provision already made for 178 ministers of our churches out of a possible 230 or 250. Then, further, I am desired to say that through the kindness and generosity of friends of our body, the resources of the Ministers' Benevolent Society have been most substantially augmented during the last two years, and that we are now considering two or three important matters. One is whether we can enlarge the scope of the Society, and include Ireland. An Irish minister, as an Irish minister, is not competent to become a member. No man can at present become a member of it over forty-five years of age. It is now a serious question whether we could not advance the age limit. Then, further, we are about to consider as to whether we cannot increase even the very large grants which we make now, and which are larger by far than the grants under the proposed scheme. Any ministers who know of the existence of this Society, if they are wise they will join it; and, secondly, if you can point out to us any way in which we can co-operate with you in helping your scheme we shall do so. We cannot combine with you, because we are absolutely a benevolent society; but if in any way by counsel or co-operation we can aid you to make your scheme a success we are most anxious to do so.

MR. MARTINEAU: In connection with the Church of England Association they have got another Society which is very similar to the Ministers' Benevolent Society, and which is acting as a benevolent society in conjunction with the other one; because there are cases in which a minister with a large family, through illness or from his temporary retirement from the pulpit, is unable in one particular year to pay his premium. The benevolent society in this case assists him on some arrangement. Of course we have no right to say we thought our friends of the Ministers' Benevolent Society would act in this way, but we were in hopes they might possibly do so. We know they have had a large sum of money left them lately, which we are only too rejoiced at, because they have done their work so well in the past, and we feel they will do equally well in the future with the larger sum, and we are very pleased to hear what Mr. Street said. It does not appear to me that what he has said has shut the door upon our scheme.

MR. STREET: No, it is not meant to do that at all.

MR. A. W. WORTHINGTON: The formation of this Society that Mr. Conway

has taken such an interest in, would never have been proposed if there had been a claim upon the Ministers' Benevolent Society. We have heard from Mr. Street, and we acknowledge with the greatest gratitude, that no case of distress has ever gone unrelieved. That is most satisfactory, but it is not what I, who have been a minister, on behalf of those who are still in the ministry, can feel satisfied with. There should be some claim upon it, even if it is a claim supported by friendly help. I had the honour of addressing to you, sir, a letter which was printed and submitted to the Ministers' Benevolent Society. It pointed out a scheme to them which I think would have enabled them to anticipate the formation of a separate society, by adding to their scheme a second department, in which the work which Mr. Conway proposes could have been accomplished. There should in the first instance be a claim for those who subscribe to section B of the Society, and also if they wished to subscribe to section 'A' of the Benevolent Society they might come in for a supplementary grant, according to their needs. I never saw the reply to the suggestion which Mr. Fenton tells me was sent, and, therefore, I cannot tell what reasons they had for rejecting it. They now have about £50,000 at their disposal; and I cannot but think if they would look into the scheme that Mr. Conway and Mr. Martineau have prepared, and compare it with the letter written by me, instead of having two Societies of this kind, we might have two sections of their Society, under one of which a minister could subscribe with a certainty that he would get a definite amount of advantage, and that he might further subscribe to the other section with the feeling that in a case of distress he would be relieved from his difficulty. I think it is very desirable that a committee should be appointed, and that they should be the means of friendly co-operation in the matter.

REV. F. FREESTON: The original idea of this scheme is, I take it, the provision for old age. The Committee have given us not only an annuity scheme; but they have tacked on to it insurance, to be paid only at death to representatives. I wish to point out that the working of this scheme would not cover two sections of our ministers. In the first instance, most of our ministers probably have already insured in such form of insurance that can be paid to their representatives after death, and, therefore, would not be disposed to insure a second time in a form which involves them in a higher premium. If you can dis sever the idea of the inevitability of insuring to pay out at death from insurance to be paid during life, you thereby reduce the premium and increase the allurements of the scheme. The second set of ministers who will not be included are those who are not married, and whose representatives after death may be of a distant character. Why should they, in order to secure the advantage of an annuity for their old age, be compelled to provide also for some distant relatives when they are gone? The suggestion I would make is that in addition to the insurance scheme of the

Equitable Society there should be added if possible a simple annuity scheme, without the £250 insurance, which would have two effects—first to reduce the premiums, and second to increase the annuities.

REV. A. H. SHELLEY : I rise on behalf of the Rev. J. A. Kelly, who has been obliged to leave the meeting. He asked me to say a few words with respect to the Irish Presbyterian Ministers' Widows' Fund Association. If I remember rightly only five ministers of our churches there, out of a total of forty, are members of it, because of the exceedingly onerous sum which has to be paid on joining it, and also because of its somewhat unsatisfactory financial nature and its administration. I think a great many Irish ministers would join this present scheme ; and, therefore, the calculation which Mr. Martineau entered into will have to be amended in that particular.

MR. CONWAY, in reply to the discussion said : I think all I need say is that no doubt the suggestion of Mr. Freeston may be considered with advantage, and be referred to the Committee.

The motion that the Report of the Special Committee be approved and adopted was then agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE.

REV. J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A. : In order to carry out the scheme I move 'That a Committee be appointed to carry out the scheme now adopted for a Ministers' Superannuation Fund with such modifications as may be found advisable, and to take steps to raise the necessary funds. And that this Committee consist of the following gentlemen, with power to add to their number : Revs. J. E. Carpenter, C. C. Coe, J. C. Street, W. G. Tarrant, and Jos. Wood, Messrs. F. Taylor, D. Ainsworth, P. J. Worsley, C. Fenton, W. B. Odgers, Q.C., H. Chatfeild Clarke, A. W. Worthington, D. Martineau and J. Cogan Conway.' This will commend itself to you as a representative list, embracing all parts of our country geographically, and containing members whose business ability is well-known. We are especially indebted to Mr. Conway for bringing the subject before us, not allowing himself to be deterred, but time after time pressing it forward ; and we are no less indebted to Mr. David Martineau for the calculations necessary to present the scheme in a working form. I move the resolution with the earnest hope that when the Conference assembles three years hence it may be possible for this Committee to report that a definite scheme is available and that the money is found to back it.

MR. FRANK TAYLOR : I cordially second the resolution which has been proposed in such fitting terms by Mr. Carpenter, and I hope that in the multitude of counsellors wisdom and safety may be found.

The resolution was then agreed to and the Conference adjourned.

THE EVENING MEETING.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the Temperance Hall, and was very largely attended by ladies and gentlemen resident in the town, in addition to the delegates and members of the Conference. The chair was occupied by Mr. W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., who was supported on the platform by the Mayor of the Borough and other prominent local men. The meeting having been opened by the singing, to organ accompaniment, of the hymn 'God of ages and of nations,'

The CHAIRMAN said : Ministers, delegates, and friends,—What is the National Conference of the members of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-Subscribing or kindred Churches ? Our great leader, Dr. Martineau, endeavoured to devise a shorter title, and could not. What does it mean ? What is a Unitarian Church ? By a Unitarian I understand, speaking for myself, a Christian who believes in one God. Some persons would define it by the negative, and say that a Unitarian was a Christian who did not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. I prefer the affirmative form ; as St. Paul says, 'To us there is but one God, the Father.' 'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.' And because God is Father of all His people, it follows that all the men and women on earth are brothers and sisters, and that we must treat them as such. That is why we are here on earth—to serve God by serving our fellow-men and women, and making the world a little better than we found it. Those are the two main doctrines which are the essence of Unitarianism—the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. The same meaning I attach to such synonyms as Liberal Christian and Free Christian. Then comes the word Presbyterian. Why, some people say, do these Unitarians include the word Presbyterian in their lengthy title ? The reason is perhaps rather a historical one than one which affects the present day, and yet not wholly so. The English Presbyterians were the men who, aided by the Independents and Baptists, and other good honest Christians, fought against Charles the First and Archbishop Laud, and Strafford. They were men whose fathers had been burned at Smithfield, who themselves had been imprisoned and tortured and fined for conscience sake ; and they differed from Archbishop Laud and the English Church on matters of discipline and government rather than on matters of doctrine. And whereas Archbishop Laud and others insisted on government by bishops, they said 'No, we will not be ruled by people appointed by the Government or the State, but by our own officers whom we elect in our Presbyteries.' That was the essence of the Presbyterian system. We have no such Presbyteries now. We have our district associations, which do good work in sustaining and fostering our weaker churches ; we have the

British and Foreign Unitarian Association, which does good work in maintaining churches in England, Scotland, Ireland, India, &c. ; we have this Conference, which meets to deliberate, and discuss questions specially affecting all the churches on our roll. But we have no Presbytery. We have arrived at congregational independence. No organization that exists in our body has any power to interfere between a minister and his congregation. The ministers are appointed by the congregations, and the minister and the congregation between them manage their own affairs. But we keep the name Presbyterian because we are proud of our ancestry. Many of our chapels have the word Presbyterian mentioned in their trust deeds. Some of our congregations were originally, and are still to some extent, General Baptists. Others, a few, were Independent in origin ; others came to us in different ways from different denominations. We have a very varied ancestry ; but no doubt the majority of our ancient chapels were Presbyterian. Then come the two remaining words—Non-Subscribing or kindred congregations. What ‘Non-Subscribing’ means is this : that in order to be a minister, or a trustee, or a member, or an officer, of one of our congregations, a man is never asked to sign a creed or to proclaim any profession of faith. Don’t let it be supposed that we have not got a faith ; don’t let it be supposed that we are not very clear and positive and precise in knowing exactly what we do believe, each one of us. But we never endeavour to impose upon another man a profession of belief. Others, amongst the Baptists and Independents, hold the same view, I know ; but we think that we at all events work the principle a little more thoroughly than our orthodox brethren as a rule. And how comes it that our chapels are non-subscribing ? Because those old Presbyterians who had suffered at the hands of Charles the First and Archbishop Laud said, ‘We will not impose on our descendants any fetters which shall bind them to this creed or to that.’ They dedicated their chapels to the worship of Almighty God ; they imposed no doctrine which must be preached therein, except in so far as doctrine may be implied in the simple expression ‘this building must be used for the worship of Almighty God.’ And what was the result ? The pastor or the congregation of one of these English Presbyterian chapels could read the Bible without anybody’s spectacles on their noses. They read the Bible, they were free to study the history of mankind, free to commune with their own consciences, free to study the book of nature, free to study God’s dealings with men ; and in that way to discover, each for himself, what to him seemed to be God’s truth, and having found it, to proclaim it to his fellow-men. And gradually they changed from attaching so much importance to matters of church government, and came rather to deal with matters of doctrine. They read the Bible for themselves, and they said

'We cannot find anywhere, from cover to cover, the doctrine of the Trinity that is taught by our brethren.' First giving up that, they took up an Arian position, much the same as a century earlier Milton had indicated in his 'Paradise Lost.' They looked upon Jesus Christ, whom we regard as our teacher and leader, and they said he was God only in a limited or minor sense, that he was subject to God the Father Almighty. And gradually, towards the end of the last century, as these Presbyterians advanced, there grew up instead of an Arian an absolute Unitarian doctrine. They said there is one God, the Father. Jesus Christ was a man, born as you and I were born. He was tempted in all points like as we are, but while being a man he lived on earth a God-like life, overcoming the temptations that beset him,—living a life on earth which makes him worthy to be revered, admired, and followed as our Teacher. So it was our fathers progressed from Trinitarianism through Arianism to what we call Unitarianism. The history of our churches has ever been one of progress. Having inherited from our ancestors that freedom from all limitation of doctrine, that freedom from all impediment, we now go forward in the unfettered research for truth. And at the present time there are many men in the other churches who are working together with us. From them we gather where we can words of truth; and we look forward to the future for more light and more progress, remembering always that it is our duty, as the Apostle tells us, ever to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

OUR RIGHTS AND DUTIES IN RELATION TO THE NATIONAL CHURCH.

REV. J. P. HOPPS (Croydon) said: What have these Presbyterians and Unitarians and Free Christians and all the rest of them—I call them all Rational Religionists—to do with the Nation's Church; what are their rights and their duties? I think anybody who is a good citizen or a rational religionist must see pretty clearly that the present condition of things in the National Church is undesirable. Every man and woman who is at all interested in the nation's welfare and in religion should be interested in this vital question of what is to be done to make the best use of this great and influential national institution. None can prophesy what will be done in this country in regard to religion and the church in the coming century, but I think there are certain things we can do, both in relation to the National Church and Non-conformity which will help those who come after us. It is an urgent duty to break up what I regard to-day, in the Established Church, as a ridiculous ecclesiastical and priestly ring. Mr. G. W. E. Russell lays it down that the ideal of the Church is centred entirely in the sacramentalism of the present extreme High Church party, and that is his

ideal of the future of the Church of England. Whatever we do, the one thing to avoid is the handing over of the Established or the Nation's Church to that priestly ring. Now, I run the risk of differing from probably the majority of this audience and the large majority of my Liberal friends. Taking the world as we find it, I have come to the opinion that disestablishment is a coarse and wasteful alternative. About disendowment I care nothing—money is not the question; the question is altogether apart from money. I should not myself mind saying to those who take an interest in the money part of it; 'Take the money and do what you like with it; the great question is what are you going to do with one of the mightiest, if not the mightiest, institution of this great country.' What would disestablishment amount to practically? The extreme Catholic party in the National Church is the only thoroughly enthusiastic party, and it will stick at nothing to get its own ends; therefore, disestablishment would mean at once making the ecclesiastical priestly Catholic ring a present of the whole concern, and freeing them from the nation's control. I don't want to see that done; it is far too wasteful. Pass what Act of Parliament you like, you could not deprive those people who worship in the churches of that really valuable asset of the buildings and the good-will of the business. I defy you in these days to turn those people out of the churches. You would have all sorts of people outside protesting against it and saying that it was a scandal. Details will naturally arrange themselves; but I will briefly trace the outlines of what might be a simple and workable scheme without revolution and with very little change indeed. In fact, for the most part, the scheme I would suggest would simply recognize the thing that is, and make everybody honest all round. I would abolish the Act or the Acts of Uniformity. Now, I believe we could do that easily, because almost every party in the Church—unless it is a little bit liable to be charged with dishonesty—and especially the High Church party, would be very glad indeed to get rid of those Acts. Then I would abolish or very much moderate—I prefer to abolish—the actual or the possible powers of the parish, and centre those powers in the congregation. In this way you would have something like justice done. Then I would empower any congregation under certain conditions to vote itself into the National Church, as a part of it. As to the funds of the Church, these, of course, should be administered by a State department and through local Boards, chiefly, of course, composed of laymen, and I believe that that would be an immense advantage all round in every way. At all events it would very largely settle the question of inequality, of injustice, atrophy in one place and repletion in another. The whole of the funds of the church should be considered National property. Such a scheme would I think, very largely—I don't say it would at first—put the nation in entire possession of the church. As the law of natural selection works now, so it would

then, the great difference being that you would make all the clergymen honest and all the congregations sincere. One of the dignitaries of the Church in London, talking to me across the table the other day, said 'Mr. Page Hopps, there ought to be no separate body of Unitarians.' I said 'Why?' 'Because,' he said, 'the majority of Unitarians are in the National Church. For instance, I have read every one of your books. I know two or three of them by heart, and I don't know a single page that I differ from.' The point of his argument amounted to this:—'As I am in the Church, and am theologically a Unitarian, and as there are thousands like me in the Church, what an absurd thing it is for you people to keep outside. There are so many of us in the Church, that you would not make much difference if you came in and joined the rest.' By this plan you would give the nation a real unity through freedom instead of a sham union through oppressive and enforced uniformity, and that would be a splendid lesson in real freedom. Then it would bring this great institution into line with the other primary institutions of the country. I go no further than the Universities. Not long ago they were close boroughs, dissenters were kept out, honors were denied them, and we had to fight the battle till we made the Universities really free and national institutions. And for the life of me I cannot understand why we could not do precisely the same thing with our great National Church, because the difficulties in connection with the Universities were very much difficulties of religion, and of the Church against Non-conformity. I don't believe it will be half as difficult to do as some of you imagine, because it will get rid of a scandalous anachronism which is a survival of the old days when the State thought it had a right to compel people to worship, think, pray and believe in its way and not in theirs. Any measure of church reform that does not open the doors to the national conscience and reason, which does not put a Dr. Martineau on the same footing and give him an equal chance with a man who only plays popery in the Church, is a sham, and may be worse than a sham. At a Church Congress, Canon Gore said; 'there is great cause to be thankful for the steady growth of the conviction that the Church of England must recover the power of self-government, that power of binding and loosing in spiritual matters, with the divine sanction with which Christ endowed his church.' Do you know what that means? Canon Gore's scheme for Church reform is simply for handing over to the priests, with their divine sanction for binding and loosing, your great National Institution. I for one prefer the Church as it is, with all its enormities and anomalies and all its injustice, because at all events that gives us a chance to get some measure of reform, by opening the doors to other people than the priests. I appeal to English men and women; I appeal to the young men in particular and the young women who are rising up, into whose hands the destinies of this great nation will be committed; I

appeal to them to face this question, apart from the traditions which have been handed down to them by the glorious Non-conformists of other days, whose policy may not be adapted to the times in which we live, and more especially to the time which is very near. Let us insist upon it that if Catholic priests may be in the Nation's Church, English reformers shall be in it, that the injustice and the scandal of a Martineau kept out, while these others are taken in, shall cease. It is your Church; as much yours, though you never enter it, as any bishop's or archbishop's at the head of it. 'Britons, hold your own.'

THE CHAIRMAN: We all deeply regret that Mr. F. Maddison, M.P., cannot be with us to-night. He has written the following letter: 'Dear Sir, it is with extreme regret I have to inform you I shall not be able to be present at the meeting on Thursday evening. The first order for that (Thursday's) sitting is the Railway Accidents Bill, which deals with questions of enormous importance to the safety of railway men, with whom I have closely associated myself for a number of years. Under these circumstances I feel it to be my duty to remain in the House for its second reading. I had been looking forward to the meeting with much pleasure, as I esteem it a privilege to be able to testify in a public manner to the value to me of the simple but grand faith in God held by Unitarians, which satisfies my spiritual needs without doing violence to my reason. Yours truly, F. Maddison.' I am going to call on Dr. Klein, who is now one of our ministers in Liverpool, to speak on

THE RELATION OF OUR FREE CHURCHES TO POSITIVE ORTHODOXY, AND TO MODERN SCIENCE.

THE REV. L. DE BEAUMONT KLEIN, D.Sc. said: I should like, if possible, to deal more especially with the general question of the relation of our Free Churches, not to this or that church, but to positive orthodoxy—that is to those positive views, which, whatever our rights may be, shut us out from certain places. And then I should like at the same time to consider the relation of our free churches to modern science,—to all knowledge, traditional or actual, as it affects the higher interests of man. First of all I think I may say, without fear of error, that our relation to orthodoxy of any kind does not represent, on our part, a wilful antagonism, any more than there was on the part of the Protestant churches in the sixteenth century towards the pre-reformation church. The antagonism existed, but it was forced on by circumstances which were almost inevitable. And it is still more so in our own case. As a matter of fact, if we take the historical aspect of the question we find that we rest on the Bible, and so did our forefathers before us. They rested upon the principle of private interpretation, with more or less logic, and we rest upon the same principle. They wanted to get at the real history, position, and development of Christianity, and so do we. The

difficulty has only arisen in the course of our investigations. They found in the sixteenth century that certain principles were being deduced from the Bible which they could not read in the Bible, and the same experience has happened to us. They found that the right of private interpretation led them inevitably to the assertion of certain principles unheard of before, or forbidden before, and the same thing has happened to us. When the reformers were leaving the old church in the sixteenth century, the far-seeing prophets told them distinctly, 'You go so far to-day; your children will go further.' And we have gone further. The great difficulty in the sixteenth century turned, of course, upon the use of the grand old book of Christendom. There was not yet born the scholarship, the Biblical criticism, and the archeological knowledge, which have created so many difficulties since. While the men of the sixteenth century were quarrelling with the head of the church, they left untouched the book with which he knocked them on the head. You know the story of the False Decretals, which had so much to do with the extension of the authority of the Roman Pontiffs over the sovereigns of Europe. For many years they were believed to be genuine, and, therefore, they were used with full power. The Canon Law became entirely honeycombed with decisions and affirmations drawn from them. And then at last it came to be admitted that the Decretals were forgeries, that it was impossible to defend their existence, and they were allowed to go. But everything that had been drawn from them and incorporated into the Canon Law, and into the law of many European States, remained there. And that is exactly what took place in the sixteenth century in connection with the Old Book. I feel strongly that there is no religious progress possible until we have settled for ourselves the great question of authority. You say it is not in a man, you say it is not in a church. Will you say to-day, after the wonderful paper read this morning by Mrs. Humphry Ward, that it is in the Bible? If so, you are taking a position which cannot be defended, which entirely rests upon a misconception several centuries old, and which already has broken down in many places. I thank God solemnly here to-night that I belong to a religious body in which verbal slavery in connection with the Bible is unknown. We don't believe in the slavery of the letter, we don't believe that God himself, with his own hand, or rather using the hand of someone else, has written every word of the Bible. We don't believe that God has in that way spoken to man, although more than ever to-day we believe in a divine revelation. We don't differ as to the fact of a revelation. Our difficulty is as to the mode of it. Then again, we feel we have become free to work in the light of that knowledge, free from narrow views about God, and from painful ideas about the salvation of some men and the damnation of many others. And what has this freedom done for us? Has it taken away our Christianity? Has it separated us from

Christ? Has it made us less religious than before? It has in the end brought us into closer communion with the spirit of Jesus. I feel convinced that when others have been led to do the work that we have done, they too will realise this closer communion with the Master, though it may weaken their confidence in the theology of the older churches. The great emotion in every revival that has followed the Reformation has been the discovery of Jesus, the discovery of his character; the joy to feel that we have in him a brother as well as an example. As we go on in our studies, as we make use of all those researches that seem to be in their own nature so destructive, in reality we feel that emotion still increasing within us; we are brought nearer and nearer to the glorious conception of that life which is to us children of earth the direct expression of love divine. And while we are engaged in thus trying to strengthen the religious element within us, while we are endeavouring to find where God has really put that principle of authority, we have an affectionate sympathy with all the churches. We of the Free Churches, however, accept the facts of modern science independently of theological preconceptions. I see the marvellous way in which modern science has enlarged our human vision. I consider what it has done, not merely to give us more correct ideas about things, but also, through those correct ideas, a more human sense; I see what the true nature of man and the unity of the human race, taught by science, has done for us, by bringing us nearer to the ideal of the Brotherhood of Man, and to a detestation of the past horrors of slavery; and I say science has done more for us than all the theologies of past centuries. 'Revelation is not closed.' Science is the revelation that truly reveals. It does not always tell us everything that we want to know. It does not always tell us things with absolute certainty at once. It proceeds slowly; but from time to time it reaches certain points which become centres of light for humanity. Take the case of geology, the great child of the nineteenth century. Geology, in less than sixty years, has brought us nearer to absolute certainty in connection with the development of life on the earth than two thousand years of mere theological dispute on the subject. The same with astronomy. Science has put us face to face with facts which we know to be divine, because we have been able to satisfy ourselves that they are true. And yet I don't wish to exaggerate. Don't think that I come here to ask you to exchange whatever religion is in you for a mere scientific gospel. I do, indeed, feel grateful to God for whatever knowledge we owe to modern science. I feel that it is the key to the future. I feel that it is essentially connected with that one question of reform which to my mind is more important than all the other questions of reform put together, I mean the question of National Education, which modern science is inevitably bringing upon us. And it is that again, which, in the providence of God, will prove

the great revealer ; for as man becomes educated, at the same time he manifests more and more of the divine that is in him. We long for more education, in order to know more of those things that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man fully to conceive.' We are not pleading for a dispensation from faith. We want to go on from faith to faith. Just as you must not put your whole trust in theology, neither must you put your whole trust in the scientific power of the human mind. There is in man a certain order of intuitions that come not from theology or science, but from the heart that God himself has made, and in which He works and dwells. From thence there come those strange beliefs which nothing can destroy—the belief for instance that in spite of all the evil we see in the world, in spite of all the misery and the suffering, that which rules the world is not evil but good. Science alone cannot produce this faith. The heart of man alone can produce it, because God works there. And it is the same with the principle of life ; all those beautiful things that seem so contradictory in the human soul, those aspirations which we cannot reconcile, the conviction that life is eternal. Evolution, too, has taught us that it is absolutely illogical to assert that anything that lives is destined to anything else but life. And I say we have there one of those blessed revelations of God. Whatever our divisions and difficulties may be, at any rate we have those glorious human intuitions in common ; and we place our whole trust for the future in the intensifying of those common features that will make us one. The Chairman opened the meeting by speaking to us of the curious medley of names that make up our official designation. He seemed inclined to shorten it. My ambition is to go on adding the names of other people who have been enabled to find their way to the truth by any other path than the one we have taken, until the medley becomes so hopeless that it will have to be suppressed altogether, and one name shall remain—the Church of God and of the Unity of Man.

THE RELATION OF OUR FREE CHURCHES TO THE UNATTACHED.

REV. JOSEPH WOOD (Birmingham) said : I know far better than to make a speech at this time of night. I will only give you in a very few words the outlines of what my remarks would have been. Who are the unattached ? The men and women who are outside all our religious organizations, who have neither part nor lot in our church life, who have renounced habits of worship, and for whom the old doctrines have become either vanished illusions or exploded superstitions. Many of those people are deserving of our highest respect. They live noble, blameless, unsullied lives. Many of them are active in the service of social advancement. Many of them have what a great bishop once called, and wished that the ministers

of his church had, 'public souls.' They live not for themselves, but for the good they can do. I was going to observe in some little detail how these people suffer loss because of their estrangement from that one great permanent organization of Christendom which has persisted through 2,000 years, and which exists to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain. I should also have pointed out how we suffer loss by the absence of men who could bring so much to enrich our life, who could do so much for our encouragement, who could add new thought and new enterprise to our work. It is quite true that if they joined us they might gain something of religious vision, but I am quite sure that we should gain moral passion. I think we especially have a message to these outsiders. In speaking of the unattached I have not in mind those who preach the gospel of pure secularism—as if the cure for the ills of the soul could be found in the denial of the existence of the soul. Neither have I in mind the flippant and the vicious; but that great mass of men and women, to be found both among the educated and the working classes, for whom religion has no attraction, who have come to regard religion as a superfluity, and as always standing in the way of the only thing they care for—social advancement. I should have liked to have shown those persons, if there are any here, how we might have helped them and how they might have helped us. Of course it is no new problem—the presence in our midst of men of great moral earnestness, who are yet divorced from all organized expression of religion in church life. It was touched upon by the Chairman of the Congregational Union at its meeting last October, when he said 'this has been one of the great problems of the church; we have not known how to treat those men, we have not known how to interpret them.' I can only say that the church that does not know how to deal with and how to interpret moral earnestness in a strange garb is in a parlous condition. Surely our attitude to moral earnestness, in whatever strange fashion it approaches us, should be 'Angel of God come in,' and the gain to us would be enormous. I believe our special message to such people to be of a two-fold character. First I believe we have to show them that, whatever has been shaken by science and criticism—and whatever can be shaken ought to be shaken—there remains the unshaken faith in God; there remain the spiritual facts of human life, which are as much facts as those of geology and chemistry; the facts of the soul,—the soul's shame, the soul's sins, the soul's sorrows, the soul's aspirations. These are facts which no man may ignore. And I think our message to the unattached is to beseech them to face these facts—specially the greatest fact in the universe, that adorable thought which man can never get out of his mind, which dull fools have sometimes made harsh and cracked, but which to us is as musical as Appollo's lyre—the adorable thought of God. In the second place I believe it is our duty to show that the church exists not for the cultivation of closet pieties,

nor to get away from metaphysical speculations, nor to soothe the souls of men with visions of bliss in some future world ; but to cure, here and now, the sins and sorrows that weigh down the vast masses of men, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to bring in the acceptable year of the Lord ; —that which all the prophets have prophesied, and all the poets have sung, and all the dreamers of good have dreamed,—that fairer social day when the kingdom of God shall be set up on earth by human hands. Could there be found such a church, devoting itself heart and soul and mind and strength to human service, in which greed and envy and cruelty and selfish competition found hearts hot with indignation and feet swift to redress all wrong, in which all its members went forth in the service of humanity ;—if a church could be found devoted to the life that now is as much as it is devoted to the life to come, if a church could be found in which love was lord and king,—love which is never so lovely as when it puts on its armour to redress human wrongs, and never so mighty as when it stoops to give the thirsty child a cup of cold water—if such a church could be found, I believe men and women would rise up and leave the ranks of the unattached, and would say ‘whither thou goest, we will go ; thy people shall be our people, and thy God shall be our God.’

After the singing of a hymn and the pronouncing of a benediction, the meeting terminated.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTH DAY.

FRIDAY, APRIL 6TH, 1900.

A DEVOTIONAL SERVICE was held in the Temperance Hall at ten o'clock, and was conducted by the Rev. E. W. Lummis, M.A., of Hull.

Before calling upon Mr. T. Grosvenor Lee, B.A. (Leicester), to take the chair at the Business Meeting, the President announced the names of those members of the Committee elected by ballot the previous day.

CONFERENCE.

Mr. T. Grosvenor Lee, B.A., after a few introductory remarks, called upon the Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A. (Birmingham), to read his Paper on

THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

My subject is 'The Conduct of Public Worship.' Public worship! The very phrase, were we not so familiar with it, would suggest an incongruity. *Public* worship! Consider what worship is, think of the 'inwardness' which is the very life and meaning of the act, and surely no two things can be more alien to one another than publicity and worship. The highest worship is buried in silence, and covered with invisibility. Privacy must be granted before it can be. It must enter into its chamber and shut the door. It is a secret between the soul and God. Dragged into the common daylight, it dies. Published in a newspaper article, enlarged on in a sermon, thrust forward in a public prayer—and the effect is to send a shudder through the soul.

If worship is to be made public without injury to its nature,

certain conditions must be observed. We must not rashly open the door upon an act which seems to require, above all things, that the door should be shut. I submit that as we seek to understand how the act of worship may be most fittingly performed in public, what language it shall use, what forms it shall take,—the two facts which force themselves on our attention as primary essentials, are reserve and restraint. All kinds of worship may not be published. He who conducts public worship must, therefore, discriminate. All that we can hope to learn concerning the conduct of it, depends on our understanding what aspect of religion it is which craves publicity, and what aspect it is which shuns publicity as an absolutely uncongenial condition.

In saying this, I shall, perhaps, seem to some to be saying the very opposite of what the facts require. Is it not a common complaint against our public worship, that it is already too cold, too dull, too sad? And what could be the effect of a greater reserve than to make it still colder and more joyless? Is not our first requirement, rather for a greater prophetic outpouring both in sermon and in prayer? Well, there is a great deal of outpouring about a skyrocket, but very little heat. The fires which melt the rocks are subterranean, and are held under restraint. And I imagine that spoken words never burn so deep and light so far as when they reserve their hottest fire. At all events, I am going to plead for that prophetic reserve which *précède* and is essential to the prophetic outpouring. I think that this very coldness which is here complained of is partly due, at least, to dwelling overmuch on those aspects of religion which are not adapted to public worship, and from neglecting those which are.

There is one fact of transcendent importance in life which makes public worship a necessity. It is the brotherhood of man, or, if you like, the solidarity of the race. First in order among the facts of life is the link that binds the individual to God: therein lies the source of all private devotion. Next in order comes the fact of an infinite web of links which bind men in God to one another: therein lies the source of public worship. The whole matter under consideration this morning, turns upon the observance of that distinction.

Publicity is for those aspects of religion which spring from the oneness, the linkage, the connectedness of humanity in God. It is from this fact of human linkage that the moral law arises, and behind it the knowledge of the Love of God. The education of the conscience is but another name for the vitalizing of the link that binds a man to his fellows. It is by going out along the links, so to speak, that men find their souls by losing them; and so win an attitude of mind which finds reality in eternal things. Connected with this fact of linkage, and growing out of it, is a vast range of truths, all of the first importance,—a whole world of emotions and aspirations, which crave public utterance, and which gain both in force and precision by being publicly expressed. From them true public worship never permits itself to be separated. Its language is of truths and of states of feeling, in which all men share or can be made to share; its forms such that the togetherness of men past, present, and future is never lost sight of.

All that binds man to nature, all that gives rise to his duty, all that makes the world interesting and awful, all that leads up to and reminds him of the necessity of death, all that makes leadership his chief necessity, and obedience his chief strength—all this is part of that common religion which belongs to all in general because it belongs to none in particular, and supplies an endless theme for the aspiration of public prayer.

Both in private and in public worship, the same definition of God is accepted—namely, that God is Love. But in each case, the truth is seized from a different point of view. In private it means what cannot be expressed, and what no attempt ought to be made to express, because such an attempt, while on the one hand it will lead to the elucidation of nothing, will merely seem to tear the veil from the sacred reserve of the soul—a thing to which no man can be exposed without suffering and offence. But in public the Love which God is comes before us in a thousand forms, which can be rendered articulate. It is the force which vitalizes the links that bind men together, and which in so binding them creates duty and socializes life: it is the force which has evoked the present life of man out of his past, and will evoke the future out of the present; and in which

every human life, that ever was, is, or will be, becomes part of one universal Church. This is but one truth out of a million round which there gathers the speech of a common religion.

Something impersonal, therefore, belongs to its very essence. It stands in sharp contrast to private devotion, the essence of which lies in its personal character. There the soul may indulge its egotism without fear of rebuke. When the door is shut, there need be only two beings in the universe,—this individual soul and God. In that relationship, I can never cease to be I : it is because I am I, that I shut the door or go alone into the mountains to pray. But in public, 'I' is nothing nor nobody.

And the public worship that is based on this side of religion will strengthen the facts from which it springs. It will become a chief factor in maintaining the togetherness of humanity—knitting up the broken links, strengthening those that exist, and unfolding those finer implications of love and duty in which ever new links are to be found. And who that has read the Fourth Gospel needs to be told that whoever draws men nearer to one another draws them also nearer to God !

Friends and brother ministers, as throwing light on my point of view, and for that reason only, I have to confess to what some of you may think a weakness. I am one, and I think one of a great multitude, who shrink from the sight and hearing of those pietist exercises which express private devotion. One has heard in public worship violent expressions of self-abasement which, however true they might be for the speaker, could not possibly be shared by a miscellaneous multitude of persons. One has heard expressions of a contrary frame of mind which were equally peculiar. One has heard phrases used which attribute a mysticism to the congregation, which no congregation could take to itself. I submit that the agonies of the soul, whether they take the form of contrition or of rapture, are not for the public eye or ear. They are for Gethsemane. Its mystical moods are for the closed chamber or the mountain top. They cannot exist, and they ought not to be spoken, in the presence of a cloud of witnesses. And yet what is a Church if you leave the cloud of witnesses out of account ?

Standing on the ground thus far defined, I would contend, first, that public worship ought to be the integrating factor in our Church life; secondly, that it should be a link of connection in our wider relationships with Christendom. Let us take for a moment what I must call the denominational point of view. May we, or may we not, take to ourselves the words, 'ye being many are one'? I think we may. Were we not *one*, how could this Conference exist? Beneath the strange variety of individualities we embrace, the assertion of which is obstinate enough, there is, and must be, a deeper unity. The fact that we are many may very well be left to look after itself; but the fact that we are one in a deeper sense waits for expression. It waits to be moulded into human speech. How can that be achieved? Never, I venture to say, by a creed. Unity of opinion there is not; but unity of aspiration there surely is. We have among us as many differing minds as there are differing individuals; but I believe that this diversity of minds is animated by a unity of will. All of us *will* to make a better world, and to lead better lives. All of us will to believe true the noblest things that can be said about the universe in which we live. All of us will to have Righteousness and Love at the helm of the world. Before us and above us lie common objects of hope and desire on which all eyes converge. Give them language, mould them into speech, and what form will your utterance take? It will take the form of universal prayer, mingled, as all prayer is, with praise. In the very act of expressing those focal points of all desire, you will have created *public* worship. But more than that. You will have given a common consciousness to the Church. You will have founded what at present does not exist among us in the large sense—namely, Church Life. You will have given form and substance to that *impersonal* religion which draws men together into the unity of congregations, and which is no less needful to the soul than is the *personal* religion which sends man *alone* into the mountains to pray.

But were nothing to be urged in this connection but the

growth of a new Church Life as among ourselves, the very narrowness of the conception would vitiate the plea. I plead for a public worship which shall be an integrating factor not only among ourselves, but in our wider relations with Christendom, or if you will, with all worshipping souls. Public worship must represent the solidarity of the race. It must speak for the brotherhood of man. And it cannot have this universal character if its language is the language of the present alone. To be universal it must be historical. There is nothing in which the unity of men asserts itself so strongly as in remembering the common origin of its hopes, its fears, its faiths. A public worship which is merely of the present is no public worship at all. Everything we hope for or believe in is the fruit not of our private thinking, but of the experience of the race. It is a possession of the ages. No isolated individual could ever learn to believe in an Infinite and Eternal God. No generation of men cut off from their historical antecedents could understand the barest elements of Christian truth. These faiths of ours, be they of this kind or that, are links whereby our best selves are bound to the deepest life of uncounted generations of the past. It is impossible to express them in language in which that fact is overlooked. When religion forgets her character as the child of history, she loses her meaning altogether. We may render her thus meaningless in two ways. We may borrow our religious vocabulary exclusively from the past, say from the fourth century. That mistake we are not likely to commit. Or we may treat the whole past as a field of error, and refuse to give the name of light to anything which is not shining now. To this we are sometimes tempted, and it is doubly wrong. First, it overlooks the fact that in the twinkling of an eye we, too, shall be numbered with the past; therefore, by our own act we are prospectively condemned as the children of the darkness. He who despises the past will in turn be despised by the future. Secondly, the religious language, which is merely the language of the present, is bound to be untrue. Veracity of religious expression does not mean mere accord with the science or philosophy of the present moment. Remember, I pray

you, the distinction between public and private prayer. He who enters his closet and shuts the door is the individual—a being all alone except for the fact that the Father is with him. But that which a man brings in his heart when he comes to public worship, that which he lifts up in public prayer is the spirit of his race, and the language which speaks for that spirit must be language which the race has created and used. One of the deepest mysteries of life, and yet one of its plainest facts, is that every individual man of us is a re-incarnation of the whole past of humanity, bearing within him elements of life, perhaps even souls, or at any rate fragments of souls, which have lived for thousands of years, which were contemporary with Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Dante, Luther and Milton, all combined together into that larger self whose eyes are turned upon God; and I believe that effort to get out of the present into the timeless life of this larger self is the very noblest exercise of the human spirit. It is the highest duty of public worship to recognise this plain but mysterious fact of human nature, to meet its demands, to speak its language, to revive its memories, and to frame its aspirations. And that can only be through the use of historical language and to some extent by the retention of historical forms. And as the first and simplest way of doing this I would plead for the continued use of the Bible, both as the source of what are called lessons, and for the general supply of our religious vocabulary. There are many other reasons for this practice besides the one I have adduced. I would merely meet the argument of those who, taking the modern view of the Bible, as only one among the religious literatures of the world, and to be judged, on principles applicable to any other book, conclude from this that it ought no longer to occupy its present place in our religious exercises. Should such a person charge me with reading the Bible in public not because its words were always wiser or holier than those of any other book, but mainly for association's sake, I should at once admit the charge. But what then? Association in this connection is a word of vital significance. It is the profoundest justification that could be given for the practice. Association, I am firmly convinced, is the breath of the nostrils of

public worship. Do away with association and you will kill that aspect of religion altogether. No doubt there are some passages in Carlyle that are wiser, some passages in Martineau that are more spiritual than some that are to be found in the Bible. But for my part the less wise passage in the Bible, with its associations, is a greater religious treasure than the more wise passage from Sartor Resartus without them. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of associations in public worship. They are a means to that impersonality which, I confess, seems to me to belong to the very essence of the act.

In this connection we should, I think, make clear to ourselves why the practice of reading lessons is maintained at all. It began, of course, when the Bible was regarded as the exclusive source of revelation. Under that view the reasons for it are obvious. Those reasons have passed away. What others have taken their place? Are lessons read merely for the sake of the moral or religious instruction they contain, taken on its own merits? But that surely is the place which the sermon is intended to fill. To introduce two snippets of edification into the midst of prayer and praise is to needlessly anticipate an occasion for which a good half-hour has been specially reserved at the end. It is an act of disorder. Besides, it breaks up the organic unity of the worship; it calls for a sudden and violent change in the attitude of mind; and the more obtrusively edifying the lessons are, which is the case with all passages selected from modern authors, the more inappropriate is the reading of them at that particular moment of the service. The man who suddenly calls me away from the region of prayer to listen to the eloquence of Ruskin, or the wisdom of Emerson, or the quaintness of a Buddhist Sutta—who at one moment is using language which makes me one with the impersonal hopes and faiths of humanity, and in the next is reading out certain views or sentiments which reek with the personality of George Eliot or Walt Whitman, and which challenge agreement or disagreement—that man commits an offence against the spirit of the time. The time for edification does not arrive till the time for worship is done. Therefore, I contend that if lessons be read at all they must be read as a part of the act of wor-

ship, not as an offer of wisdom at a moment when wisdom is not what the soul is asking for. And the Bible is the only book which comes near to the fulfilment of these conditions. For us it is the most impersonal of all books. The reading of its chapters is a grand and solemn reminder of the rock whence we are hewn and the hole of the pit whence we are digged. And as such it is consonant with the spirit of worship. It makes the worshippers one in the sense of their common root. It expresses a common consciousness. It revives the memories of the race. It abounds with great words to which time has given a universal meaning. There may be exceptions, but as a rule extra-biblical lessons play the opposite part—that of disintegrating factors.

I contend, then, that public worship is by its nature the act of a community. All that fosters the spirit of individualism is a hindrance to the right conducting of it. All that revives a common consciousness is a help. There are two points round which this common consciousness chiefly centres. One is the sense of a common destiny; this expresses itself by the language of aspiration. The other is the sense of a common origin; this expresses itself by the language of history, in which for us the Person and Teaching of Christ, and the words of the Bible generally, will always have a prominent place. The one is the point of union whence the lines diverge; the other is that into which they converge again. Both points are intimately related to the sense of God, as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the Being from whom all comes forth and to whom all returns again; and the man whose soul is most powerfully dominated by these thoughts is the leader from whose lips the language of public worship will most naturally flow.

The question next arising is this: Taking public worship as the act of the community, what should be its spirit? What emotion should prevail? What tone should be heard? What should be the characteristic mood? One word answers all these questions: it is, Joy. Variation from that mood must no doubt occur, subsidiary emotions must find expression, stages of humiliation, of sadness, of baffled endeavour, must be passed before the glad climax is reached;

but joy must ever be the primary and typical note of public worship. If all does not end in joy, then the path has been missed. A common consciousness is by its very nature a joyous state of mind. In isolation we are depressed; apart from others we are abashed and sometimes terrified at our own weakness; but the moment we hear the language which reminds us of our connection with the All of Life, and feel the vital links which make the many one, the misery of weakness takes its departure and the joys of strength rise within us like a summer morn. And I sometimes try to think what a blessed change would come over the tone of our public worship if those of us who conduct it would remember that it is no mere collection of stray individuals, but the Church Militant on whose behalf we utter prayer and praise. The Church Militant exults in the sense of a living connection with a mighty and endless past. It glows with the expectation of victory. It glories in obedience to its Living Head. The secret of conquest over suffering and death is carried before it, as in the Ark of God; and in its heart there is the consciousness of an Eternal Right and Truth, which no sin of man can divert from its object, and no weakness deprive of its efficacy; even the faith that burned in the Hebrew prophet when he called upon the people to 'arise and shine,' and in St. Paul when he bade men 'rejoice always and again rejoice.' The voice that utters a genuine public worship must repeat that note. It must be inspiring, confident, and exultant. Its language must always be partly clothed in song. And the hymns which it sings must not be the lonely meditations of pietism; but celebrations of the impersonal joys, struggles, and victories of the marching hosts of God, lifting the soul beyond itself, and quickening the pulse of the universal heart. As a type of a perfect hymn I would mention Milton's 'The Lord will come and not be slow,' or 'Creator Spirit, by whose light.' Nearly perfect is that hymn, by which the life of an obscure Liverpool missionary has been made a blessing to the whole Church, 'Come, kingdom of our God.' Alas! there are but few of such in our hymn-books. But there are hundreds which illustrate all that which I contend public worship ought not to be.

I will not be guilty of the impertinence of criticising in detail

the manner in which public worship is conducted in our churches. But perhaps I may, without offence, record a few general impressions. In many cases I believe the whole matter has been treated with amazing neglect, until the service has become a mere relic of what worship once was, and a mere faint image of what it ought to be. In other cases, of which this cannot be said, one has sometimes noticed a singular phenomenon. There comes into our midst a man of deep religious earnestness, with whom, however, others can find no common ground of religious aspiration. Inquiring into the history of the facts you find that the deep religiousness of this man has always been admitted. It is rightly recognised as his chief qualification for the ministry, and the hope has been entertained, perhaps too blindly, that such a devotional nature would, of necessity, become an efficient leader of public devotion, and by the very depth of its own religious life become to others an inspiring interpreter of theirs. But what has happened? This man, who perhaps from his birth was marked out to preach the Gospel, has brought into the Church with its open door that spirit which he is wont to take into the inner chamber when the door is shut. The worship which he is publicly conducting is private worship. He is treating his congregation not as a unit animated by a common soul, not as the joint heirs of a great antiquity and the joint participators in a common hope, but as a collection of individuals who for some strange reason have come together, each to make his separate case the subject of prayer. Under these conditions there is only one way in which public worship can be conducted —namely, in silence, as the Quakers do. But here speech is used. The one standing in the pulpit essays to speak for the many gathered in the pews, and that in language which leaves them many instead of making them one. Observe the impossible conditions to which the leader of public worship here exposes himself. Earnest and courageous as his spirit may be, note how unkindly it takes to its task. It is evident that the mind is thinking the thoughts of prayer, the mouth is speaking its words, but the spirit is not praying. And the reason is that he is compelling it to face conditions under which it cannot live. Exposed to publicity it loses heart, and then dies altogether. By none of those

present is the burden of the situation felt so heavily as by the minister himself. He is labouring with an impossibility. Mark how his presence, his manner, his tone become invested with a preternatural solemnity—more akin to death than life. He may speak of joyous things, but no accent of joy escapes from his lips. Among those who listen, some will turn a deaf ear, others whose ears are open will wince, but few will worship. No one is inspired; no one exults; no one rejoices in the Lord. As records of inward piety the value of such utterances may stand high; but they are not for public use. They represent the type of devotion which publicity simply kills. As prayers for the congregation they are bound to fall flat. They cease to be prayers so soon as they come out of the closed chamber in which they were born. They spring from the futile attempt to assimilate public to private worship. They may disintegrate, but they can never integrate Church life.

I venture to say that the best public extempore prayers are not the expressions of personal religious experience. They spring from an intense sympathy with life, from a profound interest in the not-self. Such prayers we have all been blessed to hear and join in, though perhaps not often. Recalling such instances it seems to me that in every case the motive has been the love of souls. The language has been extremely simple. The object of prayer has been of a kind that even children could share in the desire for it. Permanent needs were suggested, the great memories of the race were recalled, the cloud of witnesses were invoked and brought near, words of elemental truth were spoken, under the influence of which one entered into a life beyond oneself. The Church Militant was made joyfully conscious of that unbroken line of communications which unites it to the past. All was veracious to the last degree; but studied veracity of religious expression was not there. The quiet confidence in God which comes to a man so naturally when he has forgotten himself, took the place of that labouring with theological conceptions which is the death of prayer. Finding a channel through the broad humanity of the speaker, that confidence seemed to infect the whole congregation. Of that over-wrought solemnity, which is so far from solemn, there was not a trace; of that

portentous gravity which causes depression without inspiring awe, there was not a suggestion; but instead of this, ease of manner, lightness of touch, buoyancy of spirit, naturalness of expression. Joy was there, and faith, and hope; and love, the greatest of all.

I would here guard against a misunderstanding to which I am perhaps exposed through the attempt to draw a sharp distinction between private and public prayer. Let no one suppose that I recommend the adoption of two religions, one for use in private, the other for exhibition in public. The distinction between the two types of worship is, of course, not absolute. It is a mere difference of aspects, and yet of immense practical importance as such. Public and private worship are complementary. The private act becomes feeble and meaningless when the public is neglected. The public presupposes the private. I should say that the ideal conditions for the conduct of public worship are attained when the minister, strictly observing the distinction between the two acts, brings to the performance of the one a spirit which has been sanctified by the exercise of the other. I will not deny that the purely personal part of religious experience may be present in public worship, granted only that it be present in reserve. In the same manner we may say that a preacher ought to have a metaphysics, but not to display it: a theology, which he makes felt rather than heard. As the manifest motive of any public prayer, as the avowed subject of any sermon, the personal side of religion is out of its proper place. It would be more impressive if it were a little further back. Not long ago a layman of great intelligence said to the minister of one of our churches, 'Do you know why I never come to church? No? Well, I will tell you. It is because I cannot bear to be the spectator of your devotions, nor to let you be the spectator of mine.'

Nor must it be forgotten that some of what are now the most precious utterances of impersonal religion were intensely personal in their origin. This holds true of the finest of the Psalms. The 139th Psalm was originally a private prayer of the most intimate character. But for us to-day it has become purely impersonal. The individual whose inward life is there recorded has been completely

lost sight of. We remember him not, think not of him, do not even know who he was. What we do remember, and are conscious of, is that great continuity of religious experience which has found expression in those words through centuries of usage. How very differently we should be affected by the words if we could hear them without their historical character! What very different feelings they would arouse in one if spoken for the first time in public by a man whose face we saw, whose voice we heard, whose personality we knew! The state of most men's minds would be one of shrinkage rather than expansion, of recoil rather than welcome. That, I must confess, has been the effect on my own mind on hearing certain passages of Newman's theism read in church. No doubt such words must be born somewhere. I would only contend that a church is not the proper place for them to make their first appearance in the world.

In conclusion, let me gather to a head the points for which I seek the approval and sympathy of the Conference. It is of the nature of public worship to be universal, historical, and impersonal. To make it so in practice, our first step would be to forsake that mode of conducting the service which leaves it a personal monologue of the minister's. The next would be to create and to give to the Church, a form of words and usages which should belong to our laity as truly as the Prayer Book belongs to the laity of the Establishment, which should express their aspirations as well as the minister's, and be repeated by their lips as well as his. Such things I believe needful to all churches; but vitally needful to ours, because having no common creeds, it is only by a common worship that our spiritual unity can ever be demonstrated or expressed. And whatever forms be used, let them above all things be forms of beauty and of joy. In an age when Beauty is invading and conquering every department of life, when Beauty once suspected as a wile of Satan is now welcomed as a smile of God, let us too bring Beauty over to our side, and let us bid a last and long farewell to the ugliness which has lorded over us for so long. Hymns that are not joined in, discursive prayers that are not listened to, anthems badly sung, gloomy churches, heavy and joyless manners, O brethren, let us set our hearts to make away

with this miserable and disastrous state of things. Is there nothing in which we can be persuaded to sink our personalities? Is it false to say we have common consciousness springing from unity of life in God? Is it true that this consciousness can never bear to hear itself expressed? Is it good to dream of a time when the worship of our churches, instead of representing as now every variety of life and death, shall pulse with the one life in which every free soul is brother to its fellow? The world is for ever asking us, What do you believe in, what do you stand for?—and we are ever trying to answer that question by sermons and pamphlets and books, and by laboured explanations of ourselves. Friends! there are only two ways in which a religion can explain itself to the world. One is by the lives of its members. That answer, I thank God, has not been altogether withheld. The other is by its worship. That waits to be given. If we cannot exhibit our religion before the world in the unity of its worship, there is nothing else by which we can prove that it is one.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sure we must all feel very much indebted to Mr. Jacks for the trouble and thought he has given in preparing so interesting, so elevating and in every way so beautiful a paper. I have much pleasure, Mr. Jacks, in tendering our thanks to you. I regret to say that the Rev. Dr. Brooke Herford intimated to me that he should be obliged to return to London yesterday afternoon. He asked me to express to you his regret at not being able to stop to take part in the discussion. We are sorry that he is not here, but we are all glad that he was able to show himself among us at any rate for a short time. The Rev. C. H. Wellbeloved has also sent an apology for absence; he having been called away to the North of England on business that could not be neglected.

The Discussion was opened by MISS CLEPHAN, who said: I am not going to stand four-square in front of the subject we are to discuss, and declare myself in favour of any particular form of public worship that I should desire to see in use amongst us,—for that would be but to deliver myself up bound into the hands of any Philistine who may be intending to follow me. I prefer rather to look—for the few minutes at my disposal—from a lay point of view, at one or two of the reasons which are urged as constituting the need of a reconsideration of the present methods of conducting public worship in our churches. Taking the question broadly we shall probably all be agreed that there is but one ‘conduct of public worship’ which is real and complete; that which is equally shared by the minister in the pulpit, or the priest at the altar, and by the congregation in the pews; believed in by each,

furthered by each ;—that worship which is devoted heart and soul, in truth and earnestness and fervour, to the glory of God. Given that, it may matter little to us, and to God not at all, if this worship expresses itself in the elaborate ritual of the Cathedral, the simple spoken prayer of the Conventicle, or the silent aspiration of the Friends' Meeting House. The outward expression is little if the inward meaning be all ; for God will find His own in each and all of these forms. This is a truism of course, but I often find that it is more necessary to remind ourselves, and others, of the truth in a truism, than even in that of a paradox. But we feel that too often the elaborate ritual forgets its first purpose, and stops short in the 'glory of man,' while, surely, only too often the simple untutored service of the Chapel is so slipshod in performance that it doubly fails in testifying either to the glory of God, or of man. The general principle on which we are all agreed may be true ; but when we come to apply it practically, our difficulties begin. And, being mere human beings, it is just we men and women who are destined to struggle along, attempting to reduce general principle to daily practice ; as God Himself, for his own good purpose, and no doubt for ours, has seen fit to let us discern, but dimly, just enough of His general plan as will allow us to grasp at one corner of it :—and, judging from the results obtained, it is evident that we don't all see or grasp at the same corner. Hence, a restlessness of spirit arising out of our uncertainty ; a restlessness we are apt to think of as more disquieting to-day than ever before ; since, to-day, we are living in the midst of it. The spirit of restlessness is not peculiar to ourselves alone, it has attacked all churches, orthodox or heterodox ; but it is with our own symptoms of discontent that we need be most concerned, and use earnest thought and effort to discover where the evil, and its remedy, may lie. It would seem as if a general feeling were abroad that our old methods of expressing ourselves in public worship are no longer attaining their end. All around us we hear either hopes, or fears, that we are fast outgrowing our earlier, simpler forms of service, and that the services of other churches are more 'attractive' ;—that our churches are emptying, while others are full, or filling ; and we conclude that there is something at fault in the expression we give to our public expression of faith. We look round to see what or whom we can blame for this manifest defect. And some of us blame the choir, and some, may be, the minister, or the building, or the situation, and some even are almost tempted to blame the faith itself. I don't know on whom the minister, or the choir, may incline to lay the blame. Perhaps we, of the congregation, are none too ready to include ourselves in our strictures, unless it may possibly be the occupants, or non-occupants, of the other pews. But I wish most earnestly, as a lay-woman, to state my conviction that wherever the defect may lie, it is not in the faith itself ; that is rich and full enough to fill the soul of minister and layman ;

of children, grown-up and aged alike. It is a glorious faith, and if we were all of us only strong, and true, and fervent, and wise enough to show it forth in our actions and lives, the dream of the few mystics among us might some day come true, and a universal comprehensive church, *our* church, might become a living reality; only, so few of us are ready to work from the inside; we want to mend defects from the outside, and to make a fitting casket to hold our faith, which will then shine brightly out upon the world. So we talk of music and liturgy, and perhaps wisely enough too; of a bright service wherewith to keep hold of our young people, and to attract others from outside. We busy ourselves like Unitarian 'Marthas,' eager and anxious to be sweeping, preparing, and decorating the church for a Master whose desire may only be to be called to partake of the peace and calm of the quieter Mary. I think we exaggerate the fear of losing our young people. I don't myself think that the weakness of our congregations lies often in the absence or the inertness of the young folks. Given church work to do, they cluster round like a hive of bees, active and untiring in good work, in church, school, or mission. After all, the activity there is, in a small country chapel, is contributed by one or two families of young folks. No, the dilettante worshippers whom wet, cold, heat, distance, a service that does not appeal to them, or a minister who preaches what they knew long enough before his preaching days began, a choir that grates on their aesthetic nerves,—worshippers whom all such things have power to keep away; or who saunter into their places every third Sunday or so when the service is part-way through, are not found amongst the youth of the congregation, as a rule; unless, indeed, the force of example becomes too strong for them, and they fall into the custom prevailing around them. By all means let us seek to make our services as bright, as tuneful, and as congregational as we can; and then, let us all bend our energies to executing it as admirably as we can; but, even when all that is done, don't let us rest secure that the presence of God is sure to abide in it, just because it is beautiful in form and conduct. If the young people of our churches can only see that the worship, whether simple or ornate, is a living reality, from which their own parents and those around them draw, Sunday by Sunday, their spiritual support, their power for practical good work in the week-time, these young people will, in their turn, learn to look to the faith of their fathers for the source of their own strength, and to love the service in which that faith is expressed. And why need we hanker so perpetually after numbers of adherents? after crowded churches? Numbers *are* inspiring, as we have found them this week. But to us numbers are valuable, when, as in gatherings such as we have had, each separate member brings his own measure of mental and spiritual activity, directed, through however diverse channels, to the same end of mental and spiritual freedom. By next Sunday the numbers will

have dispersed, and we shall all be face to face with the old problems of how to fill the empty spaces, to conduct our public worship, and to keep the young life in touch with our faith. But the spirit of this week's communion will rest upon us, and spur us on to attack the old problems with renewed force. Let us make our public worship the highest expression of our highest aspiration; and then, let the outsiders come if they will; but don't let us worry our heads about converts. The best of those from all the churches, who have outgrown the limitations of their old creeds, come to us for freedom and fellowship; we thank God for them, and rejoice in the strength they bring to our cause. When we have made our public worship a fitting highway to the foot-steps of God's throne, we may look for the good day of well-filled churches, whether called Unitarian or by any other name. For as the poet Lowell tells us—

'Slow are the steps of Freedom, but her feet turn never backward!'

REV. E. FRIPP, B.A. (Belfast): I hope you will forgive me when I tell you that I want in ten minutes to persuade you that there is no service, or ever can be, for English speaking people, like that of our old English Book of Common Prayer. And I want also in that same ten minutes to convert you all to the conviction that it is our special function as a people sprung from unwilling Non-conformity, to provide for the nation among other good things a reformed Church of England worship. Now, I know that the Book of Common Prayer is unpopular amongst us, as amongst other Dissenters, and I confess that it is natural that it should be so. The very manner in which it has been imposed upon our forefathers, and the way in which it is still more or less imposed on us by the Acts of Uniformity, has identified it in our minds with intolerance and exclusion. I fear also that it has perhaps somewhat blinded us to its extraordinary literary, religious and poetic merits. Whatever its faults, and they are many, it is one of the great religious classics of the world; and to Englishmen, next to the Bible itself, it is the best-known and best-loved book of religion. It grew up with the religious life of England, and has wrought its way into the hearts of the English people from the days of Bede to the present time. Prayer-Book *English* is among the best in our language. It is the strong, melodious speech of Coverdale, Latimer, and Roger Ascham, of Lady Jane Grey and Sir Philip Sidney. It is the English of a time when England was very deeply and truly English, and remarkably free from foreign domination; when England was a musical England, just giving birth to a rare succession of poets and singers. It is a speech without a parallel in our history for force, sincerity, and music. And then, the *form* of the Service is as poetic as its language. Now, why should we turn our backs on such a book? Why should we leave it to be the precious monopoly of one body of Englishmen? It is our inheritance as much as it is that of the Episcopalians or

Wesleyans. We belong as closely as they do to the Protestant reformers, and to the men before them. We have as much right to this sacred English treasure as anybody else, and as much right to adapt it for our use as the revisers of Edward VI., Elizabeth, or Charles had to adapt it to theirs. We, too, have a special reason for doing so. Our theology is strange to the mass of the English people. It is a barrier between us and them. All the more, then, ought our worship to be as familiar as possible to them. It should make them, as far as can be, at home among us. The use of a form of the Prayer Book would prove to people whom we invite to our services that we are not so very different from them after all; that we have arrived, perhaps by a different route, at very similar conclusions, and can use, in a very large measure, the language of devotion which is already dear to them. I must say it seems to me astonishing that when we have such a book already in our hands, so unique, so matchless, and so well-known, we should prefer to draw up liturgies of our own, which must be strange and probably unattractive to the English public, without associations, homeliness, poetry, imagination, and probably ill-written, and which will cease to satisfy even ourselves in a few years. And there is another reason why we should keep, as nearly as we can, to the old book. It is good for us to feel that we are at one with others, and not an isolated, a peculiar and provincial, people. It is good for us to use words of prayer and praise which have been uttered by Alfred and Wiclif, Sir Thomas More, Sidney, Shakspeare, Hooker, and George Herbert, and have gained an added sacredness from being spoken by these and many thousands of good and great Englishmen. It is good for us to speak and love the words which the great mass of our countrymen speak and love, and to feel at one with them in spite of our different opinions. Now, this can be done without any sacrifice of truth. Very slight changes would make the services suitable for modern use. Omissions alone would almost do it, and omissions are better than alterations. I have been struck by the similarity between the revisions of Theophilus Lindsey, Dr. Sadler, and Stopford Brooke; and there is, I believe, a closer resemblance between those of our churches which use some form of the Common Prayer than between those which keep to the old open service. And the mention of this old open service reminds me that its best feature, its essential, abiding feature, the free prayers by the minister, the spontaneous or written expression of the minister's personal feeling toward God, can be introduced into such a revision as I advocate of the Prayer Book Service. No prayers are so comprehensive, so simple, so rich in spiritual experience as those of the Book of Common Prayer. But alone they are archaic; they want supplementing, they want the modern voice, they want the free outpourings of men's hearts. It is true that the minister has an opportunity of uttering his thoughts and feelings in the sermon; but he

should have the right to utter his feelings also in the worship. The service would gain by it, without becoming at any time, what the open service is always in danger of becoming, a one-man utterance and not a general and a congregational devotion. I have drawn up a series of short hints for my young people at All Souls' Church in Belfast and I should like to give them to you.

- (1.) Be in time.
- (2.) If late, do not enter during reading or prayer.
- (3.) Join in the singing, including the responses and Amens. (And if you are modest enough to say that God has not given you the power to sing, which I don't believe, then try to make 'a joyful noise.')
- (4.) Kneel, do not lounge, at prayer.
- (5.) Keep your thoughts fixed on the service.
- (6.) Do not look round you, when the door opens, to see who is coming in.
- (7.) Do not talk or whisper to your neighbour.
- (8.) If the sermon is dull, and you cannot attend, sit quietly and think of your faults, and preach yourself a sermon.

REV. RUDOLPH DAVIS, B.A. (Evesham): May I preface one or two words on the distinction which Mr. Jacks made between public and private worship. I was glad that towards the end of the paper it seemed to lessen. For I believe that it would be disastrous to the religious feeling of our service if that distinction were carried out to its fullest extent. The matter described as public worship can be treated in a private manner in private devotion; but also the matter of private devotion can be treated in a manner suited to public worship. A very large number, probably the majority of the members of our congregations, have no private devotions. Their sole religious life is in public worship. Among the more educated it may be different. But those who go much among the working class members of their congregations cannot help realising how small, if any, are their private devotions. Further, nothing that any minister can say as to the value of Biblical lessons would I dissent from. But I should regret that the lessons of our service should be confined to the Bible. I should suggest that one lesson should be Biblical, and the other non-Biblical. Now, a foundation principle of our religion is the continued revelation of God. That is the most vital thing in the religion of many of us. We look upon the past in the light of our own religious experience to-day, and we don't get our knowledge, our first knowledge, of God, from the past; we get it first hand, and I maintain that we are faithless to this first principle of our religion when we confine ourselves to Biblical lessons.

MR. JAMES SHONE (Belfast): I feel somewhat diffident, as a younger lay member of one of our churches, in speaking on this important subject of public worship. But I think possibly it may do no harm for our ministers

to know how these things strike a laymen of the younger generation. I sympathise strongly with Mr. Jacks in his advocacy of a more interesting, a more beautiful, and a more soul stirring form of worship than is prevalent in very many, I think most, of our churches. Speaking of the North of Ireland, in some churches it hardly appears to me as worship at all. It is more like a series of readings and a lecture. I differ from Mr. Fripp in preferring any one stereotyped form of service. It is a universal experience—perhaps it ought not to be so—that if we hear a thing too often it becomes stale and loses its efficiency. I cannot at all agree with Mr. Jacks in the sharp distinction he tried to draw between public and private worship. I felt as he spoke that the effect upon myself of such a form of worship as he would advocate, which leaves out everything that is personal, everything that most deeply touches the soul, would not be beneficial. If you attempt to draw such a distinction you run the danger of taking all the life out of public worship, and leaving it a dead form and ceremony. I regret, too, that Mr. Jacks would prevent the reading of those truer and deeper passages out of the greater poets in public. We know that Tennyson touches often on some of the deepest individual experiences, and are we to say that such passages of his works must only be read in private? I hold that they may be read at our services with advantage. Then we come to the historic forms of utterance and the effect of association. Well, association has various effects. It certainly to some extent deepens and strengthens the force of words, but on the other hand it quite as often, or more often perhaps, distorts them. Truth, even the old truth, needs re-statement in every age, and for every age. God speaks not only to the past, but to us; and the inspiration of God has a right to find ever a fresh voice and a fresh expression in our service.

REV. E. W. LUMMIS, M.A. (Hull): My two predecessors have already protested against the over-drawn distinction between the nature of private and public worship, which characterises Mr. Jacks' paper. That there is a certain principle of decency which lies at the root of what Mr. Jacks said, all of us would sympathetically feel; but that it can be elevated into such a very sharp distinction as was implied in the central part of Mr. Jacks' paper, I think the majority of us would deny. I think most of us go from private to public worship with absolutely no feeling of discontinuity. And I should think it is true for the layman as well as the minister. There is another point,—the exclusion of extra-Biblical lessons. I don't quite understand why we must exclude passages which 'reek of the personality of George Eliot or of Walt Whitman'—not that Whitman seems to me the most suitable selection. It is impossible for us to eliminate the element of personality from the conduct of public worship. There is our own personality finding its way in certainly, and why should we assume that our own person-

ality is something so much more excellent than the personality of George Eliot, or of Newman, or the others whom Mr. Jacks mentioned as capable of being selected. Moreover, Mr. Jacks said, and here I entirely agree with him, that one of the most salutary exercises of the soul was to escape from the provincial, the narrow and the immediate, into the larger timeless life of public worship. He proposes, however, that we should effect this by tying ourselves down to historical phrases—those phrases which happen to have been used at some previous time to express the narrow provincial feeling and sentiment which then prevailed! I quite agree again with Mr. Jacks in that we ought to make an effort to gather if possible into one sentiment, and the range of our sympathy, the whole life of the Christian Church behind us, and I think I might add of all other churches which have since been feeling their way towards God; but there is a way of catching at and interpreting the universal sympathy of all effort towards God, which eschews the adoption of particular phrases. It is by accident that we have even this Bible, it is by accident that our Prayer Book is in this form, that these phrases have got into our hands, and surely it is not an accident of that kind that should cramp us in our selection of modes of spiritual expression. Just one more point upon which I wish to make a hasty protest. I don't find, as a minister, and I never found as a layman, that there was any harsh change of mental attitude in the transition from the purely devotional part of the service to the sermon. It always seemed to me, when worship was properly conducted, that the sermon was an act of worship and part of a homogeneous whole.

MR. COGAN CONWAY: Mr. Chairman and friends, I venture to intrude for a minute just to say that in my humble opinion the greatest and the most valuable gift that Dr. Martineau gave, not only to our church but to the world, is the 'Ten Services'—the revised version, I mean. It seems a little odd that some of his most ardent disciples and warmest admirers don't seem satisfied with it. I know that some people—country congregations in particular—find a difficulty in the singing of the chants and the canticles; but might not those canticles be read? One advantage of adopting, generally if not universally, those Ten Services, is that you are not confined to one particular service. I have listened, as we all have, with very great pleasure to Mr. Fripp's remarks. I don't agree with all of them, I cannot help thinking that the service of Common Prayer is founded on what we at all events consider a false theology, and if you eliminate the theology from the service I don't think the result is satisfactory. At all events it is not for me.

REV. J. RUDDLE (Chorlton): I feel profoundly grateful to Mr. Jacks for his paper this morning. In speaking of the 139th Psalm he said that we did not know the author, and he seemed to believe that it was all the better that it came down to us impersonally. I don't agree with him. We have

profoundly spiritual hymns in the English language of which we know the author perfectly well, and we sing them because we realise all the better, knowing the man, how deep the spiritual experiences were which brought them forth.

THE CHAIRMAN intimated that Mr. Jacks did not wish to reply, and the discussion closed.

VOTE OF THANKS.

MR. COLFOX : After the series of interesting and I hope profitable meetings that we have had during the past few days, there is one duty devolving upon us, namely, to pass a cordial and most hearty vote of thanks to the President of the Conference for his conduct in the chair, and for all he has done during this Conference. You have all witnessed Mr. Blake Odgers' geniality and urbanity in the chair, and also the firmness with which he has presided over your meetings—an example not only of the *suaviter in modo* but also of the *fortiter in re*. And it is not only that we have to thank him for his conduct here in presiding over these meetings ; but also for the work he has done during the past three years. I will add nothing more to what I have said, but ask you to give him a most hearty and a most cordial vote of thanks for all he has done.

REV. R. LYTTLE (Moneyrea) : I am very pleased, indeed, to have the privilege of being associated with the expression of thanks to our President. I am sure that all the delegates who have attended here have been very conscious of the great devotion that the President has shown to the affairs of the Conference, not only during these meetings in public, but during those years of work that have preceded these successful gatherings. This Conference comes to us as a real awakening of the best life that is within us ; and we go home more stirred, perhaps, with a sense of our own unworthiness, but also with a deep desire to be faithful to the great cause that we are advocating in common. I have the greatest possible pleasure in seconding this resolution.

The resolution was then put and carried amid acclamation.

MR. W. BLAKE ODGERS, Q.C., having replied in suitable terms, the concluding hymn, 'God of the earnest heart,' by Samuel Johnson, was sung, a benediction was pronounced, and the Conference finally dispersed.

